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The scriptural and
historical arguments for

THE
SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL
ARGUMENTS
FOR
INFANT BAPTISM
EXAMINED.

BY
J. TORREY SMITH, A. M.

Philadelphia :
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
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INTRODUCTION.

WHEN shall Christians see eye to eye? When shall the watchmen of Zion lift up their voices together? Such are the breathings of all true hearts as they look around upon the present divided state of Christendom, and listen to the discordant voices that murmur on every side.

It may be that the strongest, as well as the most susceptible minds, unite in deploring the existence of controversy among Christians. There is abundant reason to deplore it. Yet while any sincere Christians mistake their Master's will, and live in disobedience to his commands—while any of “the leaders of God's people cause them to err”—however unconsciously or unwillingly—there is a solemn and imperative necessity for controversy. And none can deny that such is the case still on the subject of Christian Baptism,

after all that has been written upon it for the last two or three centuries. And even if Baptists were to hold their peace, such are the different views and conflicting practices of Pedobaptists, that controversy would still roll its stormy clouds among them for years to come. So long, for example, as the gorgeous antique error of "baptismal regeneration" is maintained by the Greek and Roman, and in fact by all National Protestant Churches—that is to say, by full *nine-tenths* of nominal Christendom—can there be peace? Or, could there be, unless it were the peace of the grave? "And it came to pass when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?"—2 Kings, ix. 22.

But we turn from this "outer court of the temple," which, according to prophecy, is for the time "given up to the Gentiles," and look into the sanctuary of Evangelical Christendom. May not Peace dwell here in blessed harmony with Truth? Here, where the "glory of the Lord" is already gleaming from "within the veil" upon the eyes of the earnest worshippers, must not all darkness and discord disappear? Would to God that it were so! How sad to find divisions even

here! An eloquent writer upon this very subject* has said, "Instead of pouring their united strength upon the territories of darkness, what are Christians doing? They are frustrating the Gospel by dissensions among themselves."

If this be so—if the divisions of Christians are, to a lamentable degree, "frustrating the Gospel"—how keenly ought all parties to question themselves. *For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.* Is it not true that "the religion of multitudes is not attachment to Christ, nor to truth, but to family and Church?" Can such a religion save them? However pleasing to parents, flattering to pastors and teachers, and agreeable to themselves, is it not essentially unsound—the growth of a subtle but ruinous delusion—like that which said of old, *we have Abraham for our father?* Shall evangelical Christians then foster it? Shall they plant and nourish in the souls of their children the very root on which it anciently grew, is now growing, and must ever grow? Shall the very tenderness of parental love betray its objects into deep delusion, by confounding the Abrahamic Covenant of Circumcision with the Abrahamic Covenant of Christ?

* Rev. Richard Fuller, D. D., of Baltimore, in his recent book on "Baptism and the Terms of Communion," 1850.

These two covenants—so essentially distinct—so constantly distinguished, and so clearly contrasted in the Scriptures—shall they be still counted one and the same—not only by carnal Jews and carnal Churchmen, but by spiritual Christians who believe and know the solemn necessity of the new birth unto righteousness? In the language of the Psalmist we would say with deep emotion, “O Lord, *how long?*”

To a prayerful reader of the Bible, it is sometimes difficult to believe that such confusion of facts, and consequent delusion can really exist among intelligent Christians. Let such read the following instance, copied from the *Presbyterian*—a valuable paper published in this city. It is introduced as an “instructive extract,” from the Diary of the Rev. John Macdonald, of Calcutta.

“November 24.—This day in the kind providence of God, have I been permitted and enabled to dedicate my little offspring to my covenant God in baptism; and for this I give thanks. O what a privilege is it! I trust I have had communion with the Lord in this deed, if ever I had it. Many encouragements have I felt, and no misgivings as to infant baptism in its faithful form. Yea, I praise God for such an ordinance. I know that he did of old receive them into his covenant by seal. I know also that infants are capable of enjoying the blessings of the covenant of grace—that the want of faith in those who are incapable of faith is just as applicable to salvation as to baptism, and therefore constitutes no argument against it. I believe that the

seal of the covenant will be just as valid to the child when it afterwards believes, as if baptized when adult—that it is a great privilege to have it externally united to the Church, and for a parent to say, ‘This, my child, has been solemnly and publicly given to God—it is federally holy.’ I believe that the Commission of Christ included the children of believers, and that the Apostles baptized such; and I know that the holiest of men in all ages have had communion with their God in this ordinance. But why enlarge? O my Lord, I bless thee for saving me from falling into the cold and forbidding doctrines of antipedobaptism! O give me grace to improve thine ordinance!”

We truly agree with our brethren of the *Presbyterian*, that this is an “instructive extract.” It instructs us how fervently every pious father, (Baptist or Pedobaptist,) loves his children, and devoutly gives them up to God for their sanctification and salvation. It instructs us how in every such act of parental devotion, however frequently repeated, he enjoys communion with God, and feels it to be an unutterable privilege, secured to him by the Covenant of grace in Christ. And it instructs us also, how mournfully parental love, as well as “a zeal of God,” may go astray, because its ardor is “not according to knowledge.” The particular act with which he associates his dearest feelings for his child, is “*infant baptism in its faithful form.*” Now, *what* is this? It is language nowhere found in Scripture. And yet

he "praises God for such an ordinance." When and where was it ordained? How does he know that it is an ordinance of God? He does not know it. Nay, more, he *cannot* know it. Yet as a Christian father he will teach it to his trusting child! As a Christian missionary he will teach it to the trusting Heathen!

He says, indeed, he has "no misgivings." Is it really so? Why then does he attempt to reason the matter with himself? Why does he try to construct an argument in its favor from the covenant of *circumcision*, the capacity of infants for the blessings of grace, the *future* validity of the seal on believing, the privilege of an external connection with the church, federal holiness, the commission of Christ to *teach* and baptize, the practice of the Apostles in fulfilling this commission, and the feelings of the holiest of men in all ages—(not one of which has anything to do with God's establishing "such an ordinance")—unless because he wishes to quell such "misgivings" as naturally spring in the heart of a good man from the doing of an act which he nowhere finds divinely commanded, exemplified, or even alluded to, in the sacred Scriptures? He may have succeeded in quelling his misgivings—he may not feel them at the moment—he may even

bless God for “saving him from falling into the cold and forbidding doctrines of antipedobaptism” —but even this fervent thanksgiving betrays how narrowly he escaped from the conviction that these misrepresented doctrines of the Baptists are *true*.

That *they are true*, it is the design of this book to show. That they are thought “cold and forbidding,” only proves under what false views they have long been contemplated and rejected by good men. It is not a “cold” indifference to the salvation of our children that prevents us from bringing them to baptism. It is the very warmth with which we love them—with which we would guard them and others from fatal delusions—with which we would lead them to Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation. Our doctrines on this subject are drawn from the very Book which He has given, for the express purpose of teaching us in all things whatsoever *how we ought to walk, and to please God*. If that Book taught us to baptize our children, none would do it more readily or warmly than we would. *But we have not so learned Christ*. So far from “forbidding” our children to come to HIM that they may have life, God is our witness that nothing else lies so near our hearts. And blessed be his name, we do not labor and pray for this in vain.

We would suggest here that *this question may be brought to a practical test*. Let our brethren of other persuasions deal candidly with us, and deal fairly with facts, upon this point. If their practice is right, and ours wrong—if they keep the “covenant of God” in regard to children, and we reject it—would not the comparative results of each course tend to convince us of our error? Would not fewer of our children be converted, or converted at a later period of life? Let then the facts be examined. *Let the statistics be compared*. If our increase by conversion be not clearly inferior, where is the benefit of infant baptism? If it be in equal proportion to theirs, where is the benefit of infant baptism? If, (as we honestly think from the examinations we have been able to make,) it be in a clearly superior ratio, then again we ask, where is the benefit of infant baptism? But to put it upon the simple ground of *equality*, for what then are our brethren contending? If God by the dispensations of his Spirit puts no difference between them and us, why seek to uphold this fallacious idea of covenant blessings “sealed” by infant baptism? For in this view it is *by facts* demonstrated to be fallacious. And if fallacious *in fact*, how evidently fallacious are all the argu-

ments by which it is attempted to uphold it as an ordinance of God!

With these preliminary remarks, which we make with every disposition to deal candidly with our brethren, we commit this volume to the press; and commend it to the attention of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and who, above all things, desire that *his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

J. N. B.

PHILADELPHIA, *March* 15, 1850.

P R E F A C E .

A LATE writer* introduces an article on the subject of baptism with the following eminently suggestive remarks :—

“ There has ever been a disposition in men to run to extremes in matters of religion. Some deem outward forms of no avail, and discard them altogether, while others neglect the spirit of religion in their extreme devotion to its forms. The truly religious have been trying long to solve the problem of observing the forms of religion without losing the spirit of piety, and of seeking after the spirit of religion without neglecting the form. The little success which has attended their efforts hitherto, shows clearly that this problem is not of easy solution.”

The importance of the right solution of this problem, every person of real piety must admit.

* Rev. J. J. Dana, in *Biblical Repository*, July, 1849.

But must we admit that there is, in its solution, (as this writer seems to intimate,) such extreme difficulty? It is certainly one that God has laid upon us to solve, and one upon whose right solution the perfection of our piety very much depends. On the one hand, he has required us to conform to his institutions, even in external act, when there is no external obstacle in the way; and on the other, he has taught us that this external conformity is of no avail, when it does not spring from faith. So that we cannot escape the problem.

And we surely ought not hastily to adopt the conclusion, that God has imposed upon us a problem whose solution is so essential, which yet involves such extreme difficulty. Every *à priori* consideration would oppose such a conclusion.

It certainly is a bold position, that the Divine Founder of Christianity has instituted forms of religion, which are, in their influence, prejudicial to its spirit. Surely all lovers of the Redeemer will, with one voice, remonstrate against this position. And if any one, expressly or by implication, confesses that he is observing forms prejudicial to the spirit of piety, there is strong reason to suspect that the problem which *he* finds so difficult to solve, is that of reconciling *corruptions of*

Christianity with the spirit of religion. *That* problem *might* involve serious difficulty.

The writer above referred to, illustrating the supposed difficulty which he describes, refers to the ancient Pharisees. "They were strict in performing the external duties of religion, and yet had not the love of God in them." This is certainly an unfortunate reference. The Saviour accused them of *making the commandment of God of none effect*, not by observing the forms it prescribed, but BY THEIR TRADITION, and declares of them, "In vain do they worship God, teaching for doctrines THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN."

He adds another illustration:—"The Romish and Greek churches have lost almost wholly the spirit of religion, and have given themselves up to outward rites and ceremonies, many of which would be well enough, were they the manifestations of true piety, but are of no worth when designed as a substitute for it."

We have here a remarkable principle for a Protestant writer to enunciate. The forms of the Romish and Greek churches would be proper and right, if they were manifestations of true piety! Will it be denied that real, though mistaken, piety has, in a multitude of instances, manifested itself through the forms of the Romish and Greek

churches? And if that fact will sanctify a corrupt form, there is scarcely a form in use in those churches, but that may be defended as innocent and right.

If the present writer is not mistaken, we have here a glimpse of the real point of the difficulty mentioned in the first paragraph quoted above. The problem would seem to be, not to ascertain precisely what the institutions of the great Lawgiver of the Church are, and observe just those, and no more; but what forms now in use, which it may be convenient to retain, even though not commanded, are consistent with the spirit of piety; and how far prescribed forms may be deviated from, when convenience may dictate, and still the spirit of piety be retained.

Certainly, if the principle be a correct one, that all forms are admissible which are, or may be manifestations of piety, no limit but human inclination, can be set to additions to, and subtractions from, the institutions of Christ.

Against such a principle, the past history of the Church utters a loud note of warning. There was not a corrupt form of mediæval Christianity, which did not, at least in its elements, originate in an early period of the church, as a manifestation of piety. But corruptions in the forms acted

upon the spirit of religion, and this again produced a still deeper corruption in the forms; and thus these two, re-acting upon each other, by degrees transformed the simple and pure Christianity of the New Testament into a confused medley of Paganism and Judaism, fitly named in prophecy, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Now so long as there are Christians who hold views like these in respect to the forms of religion, it is in vain to hope that controversy in respect to them will cease. It may safely be predicted that there will never cease to be Christians, who will hold the law of Christ to be of radical and fundamental importance, even on questions relating to the forms of religion; the more so, since his law clearly defines those forms, and he has made obedience to his commandments the indispensable and unqualified test of piety. There will always be Christians, who will hold this point; and love to Christ will impel them to hold it in a polemic attitude, so long as there are other Christians, who advocate views similar to those here animadverted upon.

If a word of apology were due on behalf of the writer, as well as to the reader, for the publication

of another work on Baptism, this might be deemed sufficient.

Still the writer undertook the task of preparing the present work, not so much from his own conviction of its necessity, as from the suggestion and solicitation of brethren whose judgment he valued more highly than his own. Those who suggested its preparation expressed the conviction, that notwithstanding much had been published on this general subject, yet a concise and perspicuous exposition of the Covenant of Circumcision, which by its brevity and comprehensiveness should be adapted to general circulation, was still a desideratum. This was the origin of the first part of the following treatise.

When the first part was completed, it appeared to the writer, that the second part was as much needed as the first. In most of the popular treatises upon Infant Baptism, on both sides, the historical argument is but slightly touched upon.

Yet there is no person of ordinary intelligence, who is not competent to form a correct judgment for himself on this historical question, if he but have the passages in dispute fairly before him. And the main design of the second part of the following treatise, is to afford the common reader the means of forming for himself such an inde-

pendent judgment; the New Testament argument, as properly preliminary to it, being first briefly presented. Accordingly every passage from the early Christian writers, which is relied upon by leading Pedobaptist authors in proof of infant baptism, is here quoted in full; and every passage of a contrary tendency is also quoted in full. The common reader may feel assured that this little treatise furnishes all that is necessary to form a correct opinion of the value of the historical argument for infant baptism. At the same time, to justify the translations here given, with persons who can judge of their accuracy, the originals of all important words and phrases are given, and sometimes the entire passage.

Though many of the arguments and conclusions in the first part have doubtless been published before, still it is believed that some of them will be found entirely new, (and it is hoped not less true,) and all of them are, in their main features, with the writer, original; the result of his own independent examination of the Scriptures. The principal merit claimed for the second part, especially the historical argument, is that of a faithful and accurate compilation, grouping together the results of the most recent discussions. For its accuracy, it is believed it may be relied upon. No

important passage is cited from the early Christian writers, on the authority of any popular treatise upon baptism. They are all given on the authority of standard editions of standard writers;—chiefly Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Oxford, 1836; Neander; Wiggers' Augustinism and Pelagianism; and other writers of acknowledged ability and learning in standard religious quarters. The work is enriched with several passages from the Fathers not to be found in any other popular treatise on this subject. Including as it does the results of the latest investigations into patristic lore, so far as they bear upon Infant Baptism, its place perhaps could not be supplied by any other single work before the public.

With the earnest prayer that this treatise may do something to establish scriptural views of the ordinances of Christ, and so aid, however feebly, in bringing forward the day when the watchmen shall lift up the voice together, and see eye to eye, it is committed to the candid consideration of the Christian public.

J. T. SMITH.

SANDISFIELD, Ms., *Feb.* 1850.

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PART I.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION.

It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. Which things are an allegory ; for these are the two Covenants. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture ? Cast out the bond-woman and her son : for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free. Gal. iv. 22, 24, 30, 31.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

WHEN our blessed Lord was about to ascend to heaven, he gave his apostles the great charter on which His Church, considered as an external organization, is founded. He commanded them *to disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; assuring them that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, while he that believeth not shall be damned.* With this charter

before us, which, by its terms, is to continue "to the end of the world," it would seem incredible that there should be any dispute among Christians on the question, To whom is baptism to be administered? But the great majority of those who bear the Christian name, not content with this plain law, have gone back of it almost two thousand years, to the Covenant of Circumcision* made with Abraham, which, they say, is the law of Christian baptism. So that, before the positive superstructure of Christian baptism can be reared on the basis of the Commission, it becomes necessary to go through a laborious negative process, in clearing away the rubbish of Jewish ideas, which, from the days of Cyprian of Carthage, has been

* It may be necessary to state at the outset, the reasons why the specific title, "Covenant of Circumcision," is employed by Baptists generally, and throughout this work, instead of the more generic title, "Abrahamic Covenant," usually chosen by Pedobaptist writers, to describe the transaction in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. 1. It is more definite. 2. It *assumes* nothing. 3. It is the *Scriptural title* of that transaction.—See Acts vii. 8. 4. The title "Abrahamic Covenant," belongs *emphatically*, according to the New Testament, to another, earlier, and infinitely more important transaction, recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis. This last is "*the covenant confirmed of God in Christ*," with an oath, (Genesis xxii. 15—18; Galatians iii. 13—18,) and in which Gentiles as well as Jews are interested forever.—See Acts iii. 25. This is the Covenant so celebrated by the Virgin Mary, by Zacharias, and by all the Apostles, as the foundation of the Church, and the ground of Christian faith and joy. 5. Any other usage of terms tends to confound ideas which are perfectly distinct, and, as Paul strongly expresses it, to "bewitch" the minds of Christians.—Galatians iii. 1—29. The reader will find this point very clearly explained and established in the following chapters.

J. N. B.

accumulating about this simple and beautiful Christian rite. This, with God's help, we shall do in the following pages.

The positions which I design to bring to the test of God's word are briefly the following: The Covenant of Circumcision is the Covenant of Grace; the Church of God in the Old Testament is identical with the Church of Christ in the New. The Covenant of Circumcision therefore, in all its essential particulars, remains still in force and will to the end of time, its external rite, which they who maintain these positions call the *seal* of it, being exchanged for baptism, which they say is now the seal of it. Hence, as the rite of circumcision was administered to infants, the rite of baptism is also to be administered to infants. Hence also, as infant membership was a well established and essential feature in the Jewish Church, it is an equally essential feature of the Christian Church.*

To ascertain whether these positions are tenable, I propose to make a careful examination of the Covenant of Circumcision—to exhibit as concisely as possible, and yet with all needful minute-

* "The Abrahamic covenant is the platform of the Church in all ages. It is the covenant of grace, in its most extensive signification. It is the same under the Christian that it was under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. It includes believers and their seed, and the seal of the covenant is equally applicable to them both. Baptism, therefore, which is the sign of the Christian's faith in the new dispensation, is to be applied to all believers and to their children." *Dr. White, of New York, in National Preacher. Nov. 1846.* See also any of the current Pedobaptist works.

ness, all the light which the Scriptures cast upon it. The examination will include its nature; the nature of the blessings promised in it; the nature of its rite; the uses of its rite; and the proof that the covenant and the rite are totally abrogated, neither having any existence, either by itself or by a substitute.

CHAPTER II.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION MADE WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS NATURAL SEED.

THE Covenant of Circumcision is given at length in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. I quote the first sixteen verses, with the nineteenth and twenty-second.

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God : walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my Covenant with thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

“And Abram fell on his face : and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham : for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant

between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

“And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.

“And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish

never circumcised is cut off; if what avails is the covenant of grace

my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year."

If a fair interpretation of language can establish any point, the covenant of circumcision was made with Abraham and his *natural seed* only.* All the expressions in vs. 2-6, in which God promises him a numerous posterity, prove that he is speaking of a natural posterity. "I will multiply thee exceedingly." "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." The declaration of God is that he will make a covenant with Abraham, including also that promised posterity. "I will establish my covenant with thee and thy seed after thee in their GENERATIONS." This language certainly indicates natural seed. If it be said that the language, by a double sense, (a scheme of interpretation now generally admitted to be entirely arbitrary and fanciful) includes both Abraham's natural posterity and his children by faith, still that will not help the case of infant baptism. Unconscious infants are children by faith of nobody. But our brethren, in order to get any plausible support of infant baptism here, are obliged to interpret these expressions, not merely in a double, but in a quadruple sense. They first find under the word

* Servants and proselytes were incorporated only as parts of the family and nation, and, *as such*, shared in all the privileges of this covenant.

“seed” in this covenant the two senses, natural seed, and children by faith. Then they take the second of those senses and subdivide that into another double sense, viz. believers and their natural seed. That I may be clearly understood, I will represent this to the eye. In Gen. xvii.,

Seed = $\begin{cases} 1. \text{ Abraham's natural posterity.} \\ 2. \text{ His children by faith.} \end{cases} = \begin{cases} 1. \text{ Believers.} \\ 2. \text{ Their natural seed.} \end{cases}$

A double sense in interpreting prophecy has been very popular, but that class of expositors is nearly or quite extinct. Swedenborgians interpret the entire Scriptures, if I am not mistaken, by a triple or threefold sense; but of a quadruple sense, or more properly speaking, a *compound double sense*, I believe we have no example except in the Pedobaptist interpretation of the covenant of circumcision.

If we interpret this covenant according to the obvious import of the language, as well as according to the principles on which Paul explains the other promises made to Abraham, all notions of a double sense, whether simple or compound, will be excluded. In Gal. iii. 16, Paul, quoting the great new covenant promise from Gen. xxii. 18, expressly affirms that the word “seed” in that promise is used in but a single sense. I quote from Macknight’s translation. “He doth not say, And in seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning one person, and in thy seed, who is Christ.” So also in this covenant, if the natural seed are mentioned, the spiritual are not; and if the spiritual are, the natural are not.

The verses quoted from the latter part of Gen. xvii. render it still more clear, that Abraham's natural posterity alone are mentioned in this covenant. In the 16th verse it is declared that Sarah shall have a son; that she shall be a *mother of nations*, and *kings shall be of her*; so that whoever the seed were, that were promised to Abraham in this covenant, they were to be descended from Sarah. But Abraham's spiritual seed are descended, not by natural generation, from Sarah, but by a spiritual birth from Christ. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." Again, in vs. 19 and 21, the promise is repeated in relation to the birth of Isaac, and Abraham is expressly told that the seed, with whom God's covenant is established, is his natural posterity as descended from Isaac.

CHAPTER III.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION A CONDITIONAL, OR LEGAL COVENANT.

The Covenant of Circumcision so far from being the Covenant of Grace, is, as I shall now show, both in its form and spirit, conditional, which is the very essence of legality. God, in the first place, declares what blessings he will bestow upon Abraham's posterity, and then states the condition upon which he will bestow them. That condition is, that they observe faithfully the

law of circumcision. The language is, If you keep this covenant, (which in respect to its prescribed rite was a law,) you shall receive these blessings; otherwise you shall not receive them, but shall be cut off from your people. Other conditions were afterwards added, as will be shown in the proper place. Now this is precisely the legal spirit,—the spirit of the old covenant, in opposition to the spirit of faith, the spirit of the new—as Paul describes it in Gal. iii. 11, 12: “The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but the man *that doeth them shall live in them.*”

The legal spirit is uniformly described by Paul, as a spirit of bondage. And in remonstrating with the Galatians against the observance of circumcision, (Gal. iv. 1–3,) he exhorts them not to be entangled again with the *yoke of bondage*. So Peter in Acts xv. 10, calls circumcision “*a yoke, which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear.*” The covenant of circumcision is thus, in its very nature and essence, opposed to the covenant of grace, as any one may see by comparing the two together. “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put

my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. viii. 8-12. Here are no conditions. It is not IF. It is a positive, unconditional promise; "*I will put my laws into their minds—I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*"

If it be said that New Covenant blessings are conditional, their bestowment depending on the exercise of repentance and faith, I answer, repentance and faith are not conditions of the bestowment of these blessings, in the mind of God. If there were any conditions in the mind of God, they would have been stated in the covenant itself, as they were in the old covenant. In that covenant there were conditions, and that is the reason why it was abrogated. Salvation could never be certain to men, so long as it depended on exercises or works to be performed by them as conditions, because it could never be certain that men would perform those conditions. Christ is, accordingly, the Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises, (Heb. viii. 6,) *i. e.* promises *without conditions*. Salvation is, therefore, just as certain to all who are interested in the new covenant, as the oath and promise of God can make it. And this is the precise distinction between the Old and New covenant—what-

Why say they no covenant?

ever is conditional in its very terms pertains to the Old Covenant, or the Law ; whatever is unconditional in its terms, pertains to the New Covenant, or the Gospel.

If it be asked, In what sense then are repentance and faith conditions of salvation, I answer, *they are conditions of the CONSCIOUS RECEPTION by us of the new covenant blessings, which stand directly connected with their exercise.* But they are not conditions of their bestowment by God, because repentance and faith are included among the blessings secured by the new covenant. When God puts his laws into the mind and writes them in the heart, then, and not till then, will repentance, faith, and everything else which depends on a holy temper of heart, be in exercise. But we can have no consciousness, or evidence of an interest in this new covenant, if we are not in the exercise of repentance, faith, and a holy temper of heart. Hence repentance and faith are said to be, to us, conditions of salvation.

The covenant of grace was revealed to Abraham before the covenant of circumcision was made with him, and is always confounded by Pedobaptist writers with the covenant of circumcision. It is only by confounding together totally distinct transactions in the history of Abraham, that they are able to impart a degree of plausibility to their argument from the Abrahamic covenant. And yet it is strange that any person of ordinary clearness of sight, can fail to see that this scheme of interpretation makes confusion and absurdity of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. No man can

interpret that epistle on modern Pedobaptist principles, without representing Paul as commending and exalting as the ground of the Christian's hope, what, in the next breath, he denounces as subversive of Christianity, and an adherence to, as falling from grace.

The surest way to unravel this web of fallacies, will be to go to this same Epistle to the Galatians, where we shall find the distinction, between the covenant of circumcision and the covenant of grace, clearly defined.

The covenant of grace revealed to Abraham, is referred to in Gal. iii. 8, "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Now let it be observed, God did not make this promise to Abraham when he made the covenant of circumcision with him. It is quoted, not from Gen. xvii., but from Gen. xii. 3, and was spoken to Abraham when he was called to go into Canaan. It is further spoken of in Gal. iii. 15-17, which, as conveying with more accuracy the sense of the original, I shall quote from Macknight's* translation. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; no one setteth aside, or altereth a ratified covenant, though but of a man. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He doth not say, And in seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning one person, and in thy seed, who is Christ." I

* A well known Presbyterian Commentator on the Epistles.

add the following from his note on the passage. "He doth not say, And *in* seeds,' so τοῖς σπέρμασι should be translated, the preposition *εν* being understood, as is plain from the promise itself, Gen. xxii. 18: 'And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' The promise to Abraham is that made, Gen. xii. 3, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' The promise to his seed is that recorded, Gen. xxii. 18. See Gal. iii. 19. Now since by the oath which God sware to Abraham, after he had laid Isaac upon the altar, both promises were ratified, the Apostle reasons justly when he says both must be fulfilled." To these remarks we may add, that since these two promises were so related to each other as to be virtually one and identical, Paul reasons upon them as one, and in the subsequent verses speaks of them jointly, in the singular number, as "the covenant," and "the promise." But nothing is said here of the covenant of circumcision. This language cannot be found in Gen. xvii. It can have no connection with the covenant of circumcision, because in that the promises are made, as has been shown, to the natural posterity of Abraham, or as Paul expresses it here, to "the seeds, as spoken concerning many," while here they are made to Him who is pre-eminently the SEED, that is Christ.

That these promises, in Gen. xii. 3, and xxii. 18, referred to in Gal. iii. 8, 14-17, have no connection with the covenant of circumcision, appears still clearer, if possible, from the 17th verse, which I will also quote from Macknight's translation:

“Wherefore this I affirm, that the covenant which was afore ratified by God concerning Christ, the law, which was made four hundred and thirty years after, cannot annul, so as to abolish the promise.” That it might be perfectly understood that there is no reference here to the covenant of circumcision, the Apostle is careful to tell us precisely when this covenant was made—430 years before the giving of the law. It is agreed on all hands, that this period of 430 years carries us back to the time when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, when he made the promise in Gen. xii. 3, identified by the Apostle with the one recorded in Gen. xxii. 18. The chronology may be stated thus: Abraham was 75 years old when this promise was made to him; Gen. xii. 4. He was 100 years old when Isaac was born; xxi. 5. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born; xxv. 26. Jacob was 130 years old when he went down into Egypt; xlvii. 9. We have then

From the Call of Abraham to the birth of Isaac,	25 years'
“ birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob,	60 “
“ birth of Jacob to the going down to Egypt,	130 “
	<hr/>
Total sojourn in Canaan,	215 “

According to Ex. xii. 40, the entire sojourn in Canaan and Egypt was 430 years. Subtracting from the entire sojourn, the 215 years sojourn in Canaan, and we have 215 years for the sojourn in Egypt. Adding these two together, we have 430 years from the Call of Abraham to the giving of the law. The covenant, therefore, here spoken of,

must have been revealed to Abraham when he was 75 years old. But the covenant of circumcision was made when Abraham was 99 years old; (Gen. xvii. 1.) 24 years later, *i. e.* 406 years before the law, instead of 430.

Paul then has expressly affirmed that the covenant of circumcision is not the covenant of grace, by stating the precise time when the covenant of grace was revealed to Abraham. But if he had not so carefully distinguished them, that must be an exceedingly careless reader of the Epistle to the Galatians, who could suppose Paul guilty of so glaring an inconsistency as the confounding of these two covenants would involve. Our brethren wonder that we cannot believe that Paul speaks of the covenant of circumcision as a preaching of the gospel to Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8,)—as a covenant confirmed of God in Christ which the law could not disannul, (v. 17,)—and the privilege of administering circumcision, or a substitute to the children of believers, as the blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles, (v. 14,)—and all that while he expostulates with the Galatians as foolish and bewitched for listening to teachers who were setting forth this same law of circumcision as a part of the gospel, (v. 1,)—declaring that by being circumcised they are entangling themselves in a yoke of bondage, that Christ would profit them nothing, that they would be debtors to do the whole law, and fallen from grace! (chap. v. 1-4.) And we, with equal sincerity, wonder how they can believe all this.

No one, I trust, will question that Paul refers

to the covenant of grace in Heb. viii. 8-12,—“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah,” &c. But if the covenant of circumcision is the covenant of grace, the statement in Gen. xvii. must be precisely equivalent to the statement in Heb. viii., and the blessings in the covenant of grace, as stated in Heb. viii., are likewise secured to all who were interested in the covenant of circumcision in Gen. xvii. And all who belonged to the nation of Israel, who were duly circumcised, and observed the Mosaic ritual, (which was purely an outward service,) were interested in the covenant of circumcision, and were entitled to all the blessings secured by it. The blessings secured by the covenant of grace are, “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts—all shall know me, from the least to the greatest—I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” If then the covenant of circumcision was the covenant of grace, these great saving blessings were pledged and secured to every one who was a Jew outwardly, and who yielded obedience to the law of Moses, whatever might be his character in respect to grace and faith. And if that covenant remains in force, and believers with their seed enjoy its provisions, every child, duly baptized, has a certainty of salvation as absolute and unqualified as the great promises of the New Covenant, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, can give.

Let me ask the careful attention of my reader

to what I have proved in this section from Gal. iii. ; for it is the key to the Pedobaptist fallacy on this subject. The fallacy does not consist in the claim that there is an Abrahamic covenant which is the Covenant of Grace—for the Apostle shows that there is—but *in the assumption that the covenant of circumcision is that covenant, or any part of it.* They assume that all the covenant or promissory transactions, recorded in the history of Abraham, are one covenant. *Assume, I say:* we search their writings in vain for any proof. On this one point, where proof is most needed, it is utterly wanting; and without it, their argument is a mere collocation of bewitching Jewish fancies.

I have shown that Paul recognizes the promises recorded in Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18, as identical, as one covenant, the covenant of grace, and the foundation of Abraham's faith, and of the faith of all believers. *But we search the New Testament in vain, for any such recognition of any promise recorded in Gen. xvii.** On the

* It may be thought that the passage quoted by Paul in Rom. iv. 17, "I have made thee a father of many nations," is an exception to this remark. But if it be, the exception is to be taken as establishing the general rule. For, 1. It is found, Gen. xvii. 4, 5, before the Covenant of Circumcision is introduced. 2. It appears to refer to what *had been done already* by virtue of the preceding covenants, Gen. xii. and xv. 3. If any contend that it did refer to the effect of the Covenant of Circumcision in making Abraham the father of many circumcised nations, (as the Israelites, Edomites, Midianites, &c.) it is clear the Apostle quotes it in another sense, for he applies it to Abraham as "the father of *all them believe, though they be not circumcised.*" In this view of the passage, infants are *by the very terms* excluded, until they themselves become believers. J. N. B.

contrary, I have shown that the Covenant of Circumcision is in form and spirit legal—the spirit of the old covenant. And not only does Paul maintain a distinction between the covenant of circumcision and the other promises given to Abraham; they are elsewhere distinguished in the New Testament. Stephen, in Acts vii., after stating in chronological order the Call of Abraham, and the transaction recorded in Gen. xv., speaks of this as a distinct thing—“*And he gave him the covenant of circumcision.*” This point will be rendered still more clear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

THE question now before us is, whether the Covenant of Circumcision is the Covenant of Grace. I have shown that it is in its form and spirit legal, and is distinguished in the New Testament from the covenant of grace. I shall now show that it is an essential part of the Mosaic ritual, and that it must consequently pertain to the covenant of works, that is, the old covenant.

The church of the old covenant is what Stephen, in Acts vii. 38, calls the church in the wilderness, at the Mount Sinai. Its foundation was laid in

Abraham when the covenant of circumcision was made; its organization was complete when its ritual and service were fully appointed at Mount Sinai. The covenant of circumcision is, therefore, the old covenant. It must be either the old or the new; for, let it be particularly observed, while the Apostle frequently uses the word *covenant* in the plural number, he never specifies more than two. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. Which things are an allegory: for these are the *two covenants*; the one from the Mount Sinai, which *gendereth to bondage*, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and *is in bondage* with her children. But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with *the yoke of bondage*. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that *if ye be circumcised*, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is *circumcised*, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."—Gal. iv. 21, 22, 24–26, 30, 31; and v. 1–3. We have here circumcision designated as the yoke of bondage, brought under the head of

Hagar, the bond-woman, and of Mount Sinai. Consequently the covenant or law of circumcision is identified with that which is from Mount Sinai.

So far as I can understand their positions, Pedobaptist writers themselves affirm the identity of the covenant of circumcision with that of Mount Sinai. They always do this when they wish to prove that the church is the same in all ages of the world, from Abraham down. The writer* of a work now before me, says, "It will not be disputed by any, I trust, that the foundation of the Jewish church was the same substantially without variation, from the first existence of the nation till Christ's time, as when first laid in the family of Abraham. Upon this point I never heard any controversy. It is true, at the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the ordinance of the Passover was instituted, but no alteration was made, which affected the foundation of the church itself. Soon after this, the ceremonial law was introduced, and the priesthood organized, *but all rested on the foundation of the covenant with Abraham.* Their worship also underwent changes as to the mode and form; but nothing was done, which made the church *different in its nature*, from what it was when its foundation was first laid." If the introduction of the Passover and the ceremonial law, and the organization of the priesthood, were no alterations which made the church different in its nature, or affected the foundation of the church, but all rested still on the

* Rev. David Porter, D. D., in "A Dissertation on Christian Baptism."

foundation of the covenant of circumcision, nothing can be more certain than that the covenant of circumcision is identical with that at Mount Sinai.

It sometimes, however, better suits the views of Pedobaptist writers to claim a distinction between the covenant of circumcision, and that of Sinai. They then tell us, that circumcision can be no part of the law of Moses, because it was instituted 400 years before the law. And yet they tell us that it is a part of the Gospel, though it was instituted almost 2000 years before the introduction of the Gospel dispensation! Was not the Passover a part of the ceremonial law? and yet it was certainly instituted before the giving of the law.

It is not difficult to see that the covenant of circumcision and that made at Mount Sinai may be identical, though they were chronologically 400 years apart. The old covenant church was to be a National Church, involving a showy and expensive ritual. It could not, therefore, be fully organized, until the descendants of Abraham were increased to a nation, and were sufficiently wealthy to support its rites of worship. And yet, if it had not an incipient organization in the *family* of Abraham, so far as would suffice to keep his descendants distinct from other nations, there never would have been any materials from which to organize it. The covenant was accordingly made with Abraham, including his posterity; in which the only condition then required of them, was the observance of the law of circumcision.

But the fact that the descendants of Abraham were, by these means, placed under a peculiar relation to God, gave him the right to superadd other conditions, whenever it should be necessary in order to fulfill the original design of the covenant. That necessity appeared when the Israelites made their exodus from Egypt; and then, when the original covenant was renewed, the other conditions were added, to which also Israel gave their unanimous consent. This renewal of the covenant, and the complete organization of the old covenant church, is called the covenant from Mount Sinai; identical, as we see, with the covenant of circumcision.

I will now give some direct testimony, from the Scriptures, to the proper identity of the covenant of circumcision with that from Mount Sinai.

In John vii. 22, 23, Christ says, "Moses therefore gave you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers)." How did Moses give them circumcision, if it were not an essential part of the law which he gave? It was originally given to Abraham, and came down from him. If the observance of circumcision were not founded on a covenant identical with the one from Sinai, and if it were not of the same nature, and so incorporated into and enforced by the law of Moses, Moses could with no sort of propriety, be said to have given them circumcision. The next verse continues—"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, *that the law of Moses should not be broken,*" &c. A neglect to attend to circumcision clearly could

not be an infraction of the law of Moses, unless the law which required it were a part of the law of Moses. Our Saviour, in affirming that the law of circumcision is a part of the law of Moses, fully establishes the identity of the covenant on which it was founded with that which was from Mount Sinai.

Acts xv. 1, 5. "And certain brethren which came down from Judea, taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised *after the manner of Moses*, ye cannot be saved."—"But there rose up certain of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to *circumcise them* and to command them *to keep the law of Moses.*" Why is Moses referred to here, and circumcision joined with keeping the law of Moses, if it is not a part of that law? It is easy to see what was the conception of these disciples in regard to this point, and that their conception was correct is clear, both from the words of Christ quoted above, and from the fact that no apostle in that council questioned its correctness.

Acts xxi. 20, 21. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the *law*. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, *to forsake Moses*, saying that they *ought not to circumcise their children*, neither to walk after the customs." According to James and the Elders of Jerusalem, teaching Jews not to circumcise their children, was teaching them to forsake Moses. How could

this be, if circumcision was not a very essential part of the law of Moses?

Rom. ii. 25. "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law." The argument of Paul evidently is, that keeping a part of the law will avail nothing, unless the whole is observed. (James ii. 10.) If you are circumcised you keep a part of the law; which could not be true, unless its observance were required by the law.

Gal. v. 2, 3. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Why? Because the whole Mosaic ritual was abolished for Christ to set up his Church. Now as the Mosaic ritual and Christianity were antagonistical, he who received any part of that ritual as of binding force or necessary to salvation, must first forsake Christ, and Christ would profit him nothing. But Paul affirms that this would be so, if one were circumcised; which could not be, if circumcision were not a part of the Mosaic ritual. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the *whole* law." This plainly implies that circumcision is a *part* of the law, of which it takes the residue to make the *whole*. Nothing can be more conclusive to the point before us, than this whole passage, extending from the 21st verse of the 4th chapter to the 4th verse of the 5th chapter. Paul speaks of the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, the yoke of bondage, typified by Hagar the bond-woman, the other Jerusalem from above which is free, typified by Sarah and Isaac; and classes circumcision under the former, or the old

covenant. Indeed, through this whole Epistle, circumcision is put as the representative and synonym of the Mosaic law; an incontrovertible proof that Paul must have regarded it as a very essential part of the law.

I have now fulfilled the promise I made in the first chapter, to examine the nature of the covenant of circumcision. I have shown that it has no connection with the covenant of grace. I have shown that it was a covenant made with Abraham and his natural posterity, and therefore excluding any of his spiritual seed, who were not also of the natural; that it is, both in the terms of its original constitution, and in the conceptions which Paul had of it, legal, and opposed in its spirit to the covenant of grace; that it is the old covenant and not the new; and that it is an essential part of the Mosaic law, agreeing with it in spirit, and affirmed in Scripture to belong to it.

I will close this chapter with a remark of explanation, on the old and new covenants.

I have said that God revealed the covenant of grace, that is, the new covenant, to Abraham, 24 years before he made the covenant of circumcision. Perhaps my readers may infer from this, that I represent the new covenant as chronologically older than the old covenant. But it should be borne in mind, that the declarations which God made to Abraham involving a promise of the Messiah, (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18,) which Paul calls a covenant, (Gal. iii. 17,) are never called a covenant in the Old Testament, unless in the language of prophecy. God did not call them a

covenant when he gave them to Abraham. They appear in the history simply as a promise, but a promise conceived and expressed entirely in the spirit of the new covenant; for that is purely a covenant of promise. It could not properly be called a covenant until its public ratification, which was made by the death of Christ. Heb. ix. 16, 17. Jeremiah, (xxxi. 31, 34,) in reference to that complete and public ratification, calls it prophetically a covenant; and Paul, after this event, speaks of it historically as a covenant. Peter, also, does the same, in the first instance. Acts iii. 25. Now as the covenant of grace could not be visibly established until the legal covenant had been first set up and tried, had fulfilled its object, proved its insufficiency, and been rejected; in reference to that, it is called the second or new covenant; and that, in reference to this, is called the first or old covenant.*

CHAPTER V.

THE PROMISES IN THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION.

THE promises in the covenant of circumcision, which include the posterity of Abraham with him, are contained in Gen. xvii. 7, 8: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee,

* See "The Two Covenants," by Rev. T. A. Warner; Sec. 5.

and thy seed after thee, in their generations, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The promises here, it will be seen, are comprised under two heads: 1. "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." 2. "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." And the only condition here required of Abraham's posterity, on which they may expect these blessings, is, that they observe the law of circumcision.

Pedobaptist writers usually insist that these promises, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee"—"I will be their God," are spiritual promises. The author before quoted (Rev. Dr. Porter) says, "When God promised Abraham that he would be his God, all was promised that could be desired, or infinite grace could bestow. For a promise made to a man, that God will be his God, is expressive of all that a creature can need, for time and eternity." If this be the import of these words, let us see what must necessarily follow. Let it be observed that the posterity of Abraham are as truly included in this covenant as he was, and these promises are made equally to him and to them. If there is any difference between Abraham and his posterity, it is in their favor; for the promise is repeated to them, while it is made to him but once. Let it be further observed, that the

sole condition expressed in this covenant, as binding upon Abraham's posterity, is, that the law of circumcision be obeyed; and especially, that no necessity of repentance, faith, or any other holy exercise is here expressed.* (According to the express terms of this covenant, there is not a single exception to the reception of all the blessings promised, by all contemplated in it, who observe its sole condition—the law of circumcision.) Let us see now what must necessarily follow from the Pedobaptist interpretation of these promises. First, every one of the posterity of Abraham, who was duly circumcised, had God for his spiritual portion, and was entitled to all the blessings which flow from that great fact, in time and through all eternity. Mocking Ishmael, and profane Esau, set forth as examples of unbelief; Reuben, Simeon, Levi,

* It is sometimes said that there are other conditions to this covenant, as holy living:—"Walk before me and be thou perfect." But no intimation is given in this covenant that the exhortation was a condition; and if it was, it was a condition resting upon Abraham, and not upon his posterity. It is said that another condition is stated in chap. xviii. 19, viz. the religious education of children. To this I answer: (1.) There is no intimation *in this covenant* of this condition. If it were a condition of this covenant, it would have been stated. (2.) If it be a condition in this covenant, it is imposed only upon Abraham. No intimation is given either in this covenant, or where it is found, that it was, either expressly or by implication, imposed upon his posterity. (3.) If it be a condition, it was fulfilled to the letter. God says, "*I know him that he will command his children and his household after him.*" If God knew that Abraham would do it, we may be certain that he did do it. So nothing remained but for the posterity of Abraham to fulfill their condition.

and the other graceless sons of Jacob; Korah, Dathan and Abiram; the multitudes who perished in the wilderness; Achan; and so on down, all had God for their spiritual portion in time and to all eternity, just as much as Abraham; for the terms of this covenant secure it equally to him and to them. Secondly, since (on this scheme of interpretation) God covenants with Christians now, in the same manner and on the same terms as he did with Abraham, only requiring them to baptize instead of circumcise their children, it follows that every baptized child is as sure of salvation as Abraham was. There can be no possibility of his failure; for the compound double sense in which the words of the covenant are to be taken, bring the believing parent into the place of Abraham, and the children into the place of his seed, and the promise is, "I will be a God unto thee and *to thy seed after thee*"—"I will be *their* God;" and "no believer can have a richer promise than this, that God will be his God."* Nor is this all; here are temporal blessings promised with just the same certainty and to just the same persons. The covenant, our brethren say, is everlasting, and is therefore yet in force. Very well; just as everlasting as is the covenant, so everlasting is the possession of the land of Canaan: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land *wherein thou art a stranger*, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting possession*."

* Porter's Dissertation.

No alchemy of a double sense, simple or compound, can transmute this into the everlasting inheritance of the saints in glory; for it is *the land wherein Abraham was a stranger*, and the Apostle says that he was a “stranger and pilgrim on the earth.”* And this promise must belong to him who is duly baptized in infancy. He has an inheritance divinely guaranteed to him in the land flowing with milk and honey. Thirdly, there is no reason why this great privilege of infant baptism, with its train of unspeakable blessings, spiritual and temporal, should be limited to a single generation. For, a believing parent standing in the place of Abraham, (according to the compound double sense,) the covenant is made with him in the same terms that it was with Abraham, “to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, *in their generations.*” The grand-children, great grand-children, and the posterity down—why not to the end of the world? everlasting does not mean less than that—may be baptized on the faith of a single ancestor, and inherit the promise, “I will be their God,” which “is expressive of all that a creature can need for time and eternity.”†

Such are the manifest absurdities of the Pedobaptist interpretation of the Covenant of Circumcision, and no ingenuity can escape them, if their assumed positions are correct.

But now I shall be asked, was not God spiritually Abraham’s God? and does not that fact,

* Heb. xi. 13.

† Porter.

which all must admit, establish the spiritual nature of these promises? I answer, God was spiritually Abraham's God, but not by virtue of this covenant. He was so, long before this time, by virtue of the NEW COVENANT revealed to him 24 years before he was circumcised, and by faith in that. So the Apostle tells us distinctly in the fourth chapter of Romans. The same was true of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, and all the Old Testament saints. But God was never any one's God, spiritually, by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, and never promised to be. In that covenant, he brought Abraham and his posterity into a peculiar *external* relation to himself. Their faith, or their want of faith, would not affect that external relation. They might be believers, as Abraham, Joseph, and David; or they might be unbelievers, as Achan, Joab, and Absalom.

God promised to be the God of Abraham and his posterity, in an external and national sense. He was so. He distinguished them above all the nations of the earth as his people. He committed to them his oracles. He established among them his visible worship. To them, of all nations, pertained the Shechinah, and the symbols of the Divine presence. He gave them many facilities for obtaining a true knowledge of himself, and of truly worshipping and serving him. He watched over them with a peculiar providential regard. He often interposed for them in a remarkable and miraculous manner.

These are the blessings promised in this covenant. National blessings, temporal blessings, outward religious privileges, but not spiritual blessings. So the Apostle tells us in Rom. iii. 2, in answer to the question, "What profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; *chiefly* because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." This, mark, was the chief advantage—the oracles of God—that is, the word and public worship of God.

This is the sense in which that sort of phraseology is always used in the Old Testament, except when it is employed by the prophets to describe gospel times. Thus God declared to Israel at Mount Sinai, "I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" and yet scarcely a month elapsed before the people who were thus addressed were dancing around a golden calf, and that whole generation, with a few individual exceptions, perished in unbelief.* So in the first chapter of Isaiah, the Jews are spoken of as a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; while yet, in the same connection, God calls them "my people." So elsewhere, God speaks of "the wickedness of my people Israel." Let any one take a full concordance of the Bible, and examine the places where the phrases, "The Lord thy God," "The Lord your God," "The Lord their God," "My people," and other similar expressions are used, and he will find that their usual appli-

* All, with a few exceptions, who were twenty years old and upwards, at the exodus from Egypt.

cation in the Old Testament is to Israel considered as a nation, without any reference to their spiritual state. They are often applied to Israel when sunk in idolatry and the deepest moral corruption. When the Prophets are speaking of New Testament times, they sometimes use these expressions in a New Testament sense; but apart from these instances, the common usage is as I have stated it to be.

CHAPTER VI.

CIRCUMCISION A POSITIVE ORDINANCE.

THE law which establishes the rite of circumcision is a positive, in distinction from being a moral law. The distinction between moral and positive laws is one recognized by all accustomed to think on these subjects; and indeed the recognition of it is absolutely essential to any correct reasoning upon the subject of external rites. It is well stated by Bishop Butler. "Moral precepts, are precepts the reason of which we see; positive precepts, are precepts the reason of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case prior to external command; positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such com-

mand, received from Him whose creatures and subjects we are.”*

As I presume every one will admit that circumcision is a positive ordinance, I need not spend time to show it. Every one must see that circumcision could never have been a duty before it was commanded, nor to those to whom it was not commanded. But if it were a moral duty, it would have been binding always, and universally; and if it is a positive ordinance, the law which requires it, if obeyed at all, must be obeyed according to its letter. None but He who made the law can abrogate or change it in the least particular. No one has the least business to speak of obeying the spirit of it while he changes the letter; since the whole reason for obeying it at all lies in the letter, and we can know nothing about the spirit of it except by the letter.

But now observe what liberties our brethren have taken with this covenant and law of circumcision, while they claim that it is still in force, that they are living under it, and enjoying its privileges.

1. They have greatly extended it. The covenant, by its very terms, is limited to Abraham and his natural seed, and to such persons from other nations as should be incorporated into the family or nation by purchase, captivity, birth among them, or other means of naturalization; in other words, to natural or proselyted Jews. They have extended it to Christians among all nations

* Analogy, Part 2, Chap. I.

and their natural seed; and they have made this extension without anything like a Divine warrant for it.

2. They have changed its appointed rite, from circumcision to sprinkling a little water in the face. Have they any authority for making this change? Not the least. They often affirm that God has changed the "seal" of the covenant from circumcision to baptism; but they affirm it without any scriptural authority. They are bound to show a clear precept; for the law establishing the rite of circumcision is very explicit. It will not do to say that the covenant is one thing and the law of circumcision another, a mere appendage to the first; it is given as essential to the very covenant itself. "Thou shalt *keep my covenant* therefore—THIS is my COVENANT, which ye shall keep—*every man child among you shall be CIRCUMCISED. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin—and my covenant shall be in your FLESH for an EVERLASTING COVENANT.*" There is no separating the rite of circumcision from the covenant of which it is a part. This covenant is in no respect more strongly declared to be everlasting than in the stipulation which requires the observance of this rite. When God has declared, "My covenant shall be in your FLESH for an EVERLASTING COVENANT," what are our brethren thinking about while, claiming to live under it, and enjoy its privileges, they simply sprinkle a little water in the face? What kind of Being do they suppose they are covenanting with?

3. They have changed the subjects of the rite.

The covenant limits the rite to males; they have extended their substitute to females. The covenant extends the privilege of its rite to males among servants born in the house, or bought with money; they have denied the privilege of their substitute to this class of persons. The covenant requires that its rite shall be administered to children at eight days old; they administer their substitute to children from the natal hour up to any age within the limits of minority. Such work have they made with this covenant, involving a positive law. Extending, substituting, contracting, expanding; here literal, there figurative, here simple sense, there compound double sense; out-Swedenborging Swedenborg himself;—all this in a covenant made by the God of everlasting and immutable truth. I ask again, what kind of Being do our brethren suppose they are covenanting with?

CHAPTER VII.

THE USES OF THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION.

THE most obvious use of the rite of circumcision was to define, by a visible mark or sign, the ancient covenant people of God. This rite distinguished the Jews from all other people, and kept them distinct. Hence they were designated

the people of the covenant *Egypt* *the*
electest *being* *included* *but* *not* *in*

among the heathen as the "circumcised Jews."* Besides this, three other important purposes were accomplished by this rite.

1. Circumcision had a peculiar use in reference to Abraham; a use which applied to no one else. To him it was a *seal of the righteousness of his personal or individual faith*. So the Apostle informs us in Rom. iv. 11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he* had yet being uncircumcised." To him it was such a seal, but we have no account that it was to any one else. Indeed it obviously could not be to one who had no faith. It was said of Abraham fifteen years before he received the sign of circumcision, "And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham plainly could not be justified on the ground of his faith, unless he had a firm and abiding confidence in the promises on which his faith was founded. These promises were two; the first necessarily antecedent to the second, and, though temporal in its nature, just as essential to the perfection of Abraham's faith as the second, which was spiritual. The first of these promises secured to him a numerous posterity, and engaged that it should become a powerful nation. Gen. xii. 2: "I will make of thee a great nation." So chap. xv. 5: "And he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy

* "Visne tu curtis Judæis oppedere?"—Horace.

*Circumcised Jews distinguished from
uncircumcised - name for Xⁿ Jews.*

seed be." The second of these promises was, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" in which Abraham unquestionably recognized the Messiah. Less than this, it would seem, cannot be made of that declaration of Christ in John viii. 56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Now Abraham believed both these promises, and it was in consequence of his unwavering faith that they would be fulfilled, notwithstanding all untoward appearances, that his faith was counted to him for righteousness. (See Rom. iv. 18-23.) And when God appeared to him, (Gen. xvii. 1,) and said to him, I am El Shaddai, GOD ALL SUFFICIENT, repeated the promise of a numerous and powerful people as his posterity, changed his name in reference to it, made a covenant with him which brought him and his posterity into a peculiar visible relation to himself, put a mark upon them which would distinguish them from all other nations as his own people—his faith was strengthened and established in God's promises, beyond the possibility of being any more shaken. Though his heir was not yet born, and would not be until he was an hundred years old and Sarah ninety, "he staggered not at the promise of God," but since He, GOD ALL SUFFICIENT, had declared the event would take place, and had made these definite arrangements in reference to his posterity through that son whose future birth was as yet purely a matter of faith, he knew that the promise would be fulfilled. In the institution of circumcision, he saw how his posterity would be

kept from being merged into the nations among which, in their national infancy, they might sojourn,* and thus the promise that he should become a great nation be fulfilled;—and how as a nation they would be preserved distinct from all other nations until the Messiah, the great foundation of his faith, should be born. And thus circumcision became *to him* a seal of the righteousness of faith. But it is evident that it could never be to any other person, because it could not have been to him except in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. Still less could it be a seal of the righteousness of faith to one who has no faith, as an infant of eight days, or an adult unbeliever. God has made everything beautiful in its time and place; but out of its time and place, that which otherwise was comely and symmetrical, is deformed and monstrous.

There is perhaps another sense in which circumcision may appropriately be said to have been a seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith. God was pleased to make his faith an *appointed antecedent*, and in that sense, a condition of the peculiar blessings promised to him and his posterity. When, therefore, God appeared to him, renewed in the most solemn manner the promises he had before made, (viz. in Gen. xii. 2; xv. 4, 5, 18,) and gave to him, both for himself and his posterity, a visible sign or token of the fulfillment of those promises, that fact removed all possible uncertainty in relation to the bestowment of those

* For a clear illustration of this, see Gen. xxxiv. 14-17.

blessings, because God, by that act, expressed most clearly his approbation of Abraham's faith. It was his *seal* set to the righteousness or acceptableness of it. Hence Paul says, "He received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised;" *i. e.* the same rite became, at once, a *sign* or token of God's covenant with Abraham and his posterity, and a *seal* of the acceptableness of Abraham's faith. But it is still more clear, from this point of view, that it could not have been a seal of the righteousness of faith to any but Abraham. It was by conferring this distinction especially upon him—that of giving to him, and to his posterity *for his sake*, this covenant and rite—that God so strikingly expressed his approbation of his faith, and so *sealed* it; *i. e.* made a declaration which all might understand that he was pleased with it. But circumcision was not the seal of the righteousness of the faith of Jacob, or Moses, or Joshua, or Samuel, or David, because their faith had no agency in giving them either the rite, or the privileges secured in the covenant. They received the rite when they could not have had faith; and they received that, and the blessings promised in the covenant, for the sake of the faith of Abraham, their ancestor.

2. Circumcision was a token, or visible sign of the covenant between God and Abraham, including his posterity. So it is called in Gen. xvii. 11. "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you."

We often hear the declaration made, that circumcision was the *seal* of God's covenant with his people in the ancient dispensation, and baptism is now the seal of the same covenant. Both of these assertions stand on the same foundation; and that is, the imagination of those who make them. It is marvellous that this declaration should be made and reiterated so often, without a syllable of Scripture to support it. If any one can find a passage in the Bible, in which circumcision is called the *seal* of any covenant, he will be more successful than I have been. It is never called a seal, except in Rom. iv. 11, where it is called a *seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith*. It was the **TOKEN** of the covenant between God and his ancient people. But a token and a seal are two different things. A seal is affixed to an instrument to ratify or confirm it. If an instrument requires the ratification of a seal, it is not valid until the seal is affixed, and cannot properly be said to have existence. Hence the covenant of grace was never called a covenant, (except in prophetic language,) until after it had received its appointed seal, the blood of Christ. On the contrary, a token is a visible sign or evidence of the existence of a covenant, that would have real and valid existence without the token, but still the parties interested might need the token to assure them of its existence. Thus God made a covenant with Noah not to destroy the world again by a flood, of which the rainbow is the appointed token or sign. Now, if it is evident that God might have determined and promised not to

destroy the world by a flood, and that determination be perfectly immutable without any visible token; but the token is to us an assurance of the existence of that determination. So circumcision was always a sign or proof to the Jew, that he was in a peculiar sense in covenant with God; while nevertheless that covenant might have existed, and been perfectly valid, without the token. Circumcision then was not a *seal*, to ratify and give validity to the covenant, but a *token* or *visible sign* to the Jew, that a true and valid covenant existed.

3. Circumcision was a type of inward or spiritual purity. So it is used in both the Old and New Testaments. Of the multitude of passages that might be quoted, I shall only cite a few as examples.

Deut. x. 16—"Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts;" xxx. 6—"And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart." Jer. iv. 4—"Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart." Rom. ii. 28, 29—"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Col. ii. 11—"In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ;" *i. e.* by Christian circumcision. Here we are expressly told what Christian circumcision is. It is the circumcision *made without hands*, not baptism, nor any other external rite.

Here we may see what New Testament fact circumcision represents. It is not a type of baptism, but of the purification of the heart which all the spiritual Israel experience. The nation of Israel, who were in an outward sense the people of God, were a type of those who are spiritually the people of God; and as all who were of the outward Israel received the rite of circumcision, so all who are of the spiritual Israel receive the spiritual purification typified by the rite.—Phil. iii. 3. In further confirmation of what I have here shown, I will state a general truth, which covers the whole subject of Old Testament institutions, which I think no person who has thought much upon the connection between the Old Testament and the New, will deny:—“*No external institution or fact in the Old Testament, is a type of a mere human or external fact or rite in the New. External rites and external facts in the Old Testament, are invariably types of spiritual or divine facts in the New.*” To this rule I know of no exception. The only apparent exception shall be considered in the next chapter. Thus particular men in the Old Testament are types of Christ. The Passover is a type, not of the Lord's Supper, but of the sacrifice of Christ. (1 Cor. v. 7.) The sacrifices of the Old Testament are also types of the sacrifice of Christ. That the case now under consideration is no exception, is evident from the fact that circumcision is invariably spoken of in the Scriptures as a type of inward purification; never as a type of outward baptism.

no one for the sake of that it is

probable that he
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CHAPTER VIII.

AN APPARENT EXCEPTION TO A GENERAL RULE:
 1 PET. iii. 21. ANALOGY AND DIFFERENCE
 BETWEEN CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM.

THE usual interpretation of 1 Pet. iii. 21, presents an exception to the rule stated near the close of the last chapter; and as it is the only apparent exception I know of, it is worth while to inquire whether it is merely apparent or real. If merely apparent, the rule is established without exception.

“An antitype to which, baptism, now saves us,” &c. According to the usual interpretation of this passage, baptism is an *antitype* of the ark, or the waters of the flood, or the fact that Noah and his family were saved in the ark from the flood, (some taking one of these particulars as the one referred to by the Apostle, and some another,) and consequently one or another of these historical facts is a *type* of the external ordinance of baptism. But this interpretation assumes that the word ἀντίτυπον (*antitype*) is used in this text as precisely equivalent to our theological word *antitype*; a point by no means to be taken for granted. The original word is used in but one other place in the New Testament: Heb. ix. 24, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* (ἀντίτυπα, *antitypes*) of the true;” where the word is used in a sense exactly

opposed to our theological word antitype. Using these words in their theological sense, we should say that the holy places made with hands are the *types* of the true, and the true holy places are *antitypes* of those made with hands; whereas the Apostle says the holy places made with hands are the *antitypes* of the true. He consequently uses the word *antitype* in precisely the sense of our word *type*, *i. e.*, in a sense exactly opposite to that of our word *antitype*. The affirmation of the Apostle is, that the holy places made with hands, are *types* or *figures*, (*τυπα*) *corresponding* (*ἀντί*)* to the true holy places, or heaven.

We may here see what is the precise import of the word *ἀντίτυπον* in the New Testament. It is a *type* (*τύπος*) *corresponding* (*ἀντί*) *to something else*. That something else may be the thing signified by the type, as in the passage in Hebrews; or it may be, for aught that appears, some other type, as it undoubtedly is in the passage in Peter. The Apostle says in the 20th verse, that Noah and his family were saved by water, in the Ark. This salvation from the flood was to them a type of final salvation from the wrath of God. He proceeds in the next verse,—“A type corresponding to which, (*viz.*, to their salvation in the ark, which was to them a type of final salvation,) baptism, now saves us,” &c. That is, believers have in their baptism, a beautiful type of salvation, not less clear and instructive than the one given to Noah and his

* “In N. T. *ἀντί* in composition here implies resemblance, correspondence.”—*Robinson's Lexicon*, *voc. ἀντίτυπος*.

family. In baptism is most expressively symbolized the burial (which implies the death) and resurrection of Christ, the great facts which are the foundation of salvation. In the same ordinance is also symbolized the present salvation from sin of the believer, and his future resurrection from the dead and eternal glorification. So that we have in this ordinance a symbol, at once, of the salvation itself of the believer, and of the means by which it is accomplished.

The correspondence between these two types, consists in, at least, the two following particulars: 1. The salvation of the lives of Noah and his family from the flood, was to them a clear and vivid type of final salvation from the wrath of God. Baptism is a not less clear, and a more beautiful type of the same great salvation. 2. Noah and his family had this type presented to them *by means of water*; (*δι' ὕδατος*)—Doddridge says, perhaps not incorrectly, "*by being carried through the water.*" The believer's type of salvation is also presented to him by means of water; or if one prefers, by being carried through the water. What place there is for the frequent logomachy about the Ark's being *sprinkled* with the waters of the deluge, the intelligent reader may judge.

Since writing the preceding remarks, I find in Turretine a statement of the rule I have laid down, and of the view I have given of 1 Pet. iii. 21. It is stated with such strength and clearness of expression, that I cannot forbear giving his words. He is speaking of the baptism of the Israelites in

the cloud and in the sea, and their eating of the manna, and drinking of the rock, in 1 Cor. x.

“For what Bellarmine sets forth, that these were not so much sacraments as types of sacraments, is absurd ; inasmuch as a sacrament, *since it is an external thing, (and indeed whatever is a type of any internal and spiritual thing,) has no need of any other type* by which it may be represented. *Two types, indeed, can be given, similar and corresponding to each other, of one and the same truth, and so far the ancient sacraments were ἀντίτυπα (antitypes) of ours, that is, analogical and corresponding types, as the ark, with the waters of the flood, is called ἀντίτυπος (an antitype) of our baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21 ; but one type cannot be shadowed forth by another type, but both are brought forward to represent one truth. So circumcision shadows forth not baptism, but the grace of regeneration which is equally signified by baptism ; and the Passover represents, not the Lord’s Supper, but Christ set forth in the supper.”**

* “Nam quod pertendit Bellarminus, non fuisse tam sacramenta, quam sacramentorum figuras, absurdum est ; siquidem sacramentum cum sit res externa, et quidem quæ figura est rei cujusdam internæ et spiritualis, non opus habet ulla alia figura qua repræsentetur : possunt quidem dari duæ figuræ similes et sibi correspondentes unius ejusdemque veritatis, et hactenus sacramenta vetera fuerunt ἀντίτυπα nostrorum, id est, figuræ analogæ et correspondentes, quomodo arca cum aquis diluvii dicitur ἀντίτυπον baptismi nostri, 1 Pet. iii. 21, sed una figura non debet ab alia figura adumbrari, sed utraque ad unius veritatis repræsentationem adhibetur. Ita circumcisio, non baptismum, sed gratiam regenerationis quæ pariter baptismi obsignatur, adumbravit, agnus paschalis, non cœnam, sed Christum ipsum in cœna exhibitum repræsentavit.”—*Turretini Opera, Tom. IV. p. 342. New York, 1847.*

This extract from the great successor of Calvin, clearly recognizes an *analogy* between circumcision and baptism, and as distinctly pronounces against the typification of the latter by the former. This analogy may be traced in several particulars; as for example, circumcision was the initiating rite which secured to the Jew the privileges of the ancient Theocracy; baptism is the initiating rite of the Christian Church. Circumcision was a prerequisite to the Passover; baptism is to the Lord's Supper. Circumcision was, to the Jew, a type of spiritual renewal and purification; baptism is, to the believer, a symbol of the same thing. This analogy has doubtless misled many minds in their reasonings from one to the other. But it is to be observed, the Pedobaptist conclusion depends, not on an *analogy* between the two rites, but on the assumption that they are in all respects *identical*, or else that the one typified the other. Indeed the analogy is fatal to infant baptism. Circumcision was the visible mark which distinguished the ancient covenant people from all others; baptism is the rite which is appointed as the visible separation of the true holy people from the unconverted world. And as circumcision was not administered to any, who were not, either by birth or proselytism, *already among the covenant people*, so the analogy should require that baptism should not be administered to any who are not, by the new birth and faith, *already among the true holy people*: a condition which excludes infants.

So that to establish infant baptism from circumcision, the analogy must be rejected, and identity

or its equivalent assumed. Baptism, it is assumed, has taken the place of circumcision, and is essentially *the same thing*. But the points of difference between the two are too numerous and distinct to admit any such identity. Circumcision could be given only to males; baptism knows no distinction of sex. Circumcision was limited to born or naturalized Jews; baptism knows no distinction of nation. Circumcision was required to be given to native Jews, at eight days old; baptism is free to any age, as well as either sex, after evidence of faith appears. Circumcision was the distinctive ordinance of a National Church, the members of which entered it by birth, and therefore was required to be given to infants; baptism is the distinctive ordinance of a Spiritual Church, whose privileges none may share except those who give evidence of the new birth, and therefore may not be given to infants. Circumcision was the sign of hereditary privileges, and therefore was required to be given to infants; baptism is the sign of privileges which flow only through faith, and therefore may not be given to infants. Circumcision required no antecedent instruction or discipline, in the case of members of the Jewish household, and therefore might be given to infants; baptism requires, in all cases, previous discipleship, and may not be given to infants. Circumcision was not a command to the subject of the rite, but to his parents, who alone were responsible for its fulfillment; baptism is a command to the subject of the ordinance, and he alone is responsible for its fulfillment. The

subject of circumcision, in ordinary cases, was involuntary and passive in its reception; the subject of baptism is in all cases required to render active and voluntary obedience, receiving it in the exercise of faith. Circumcision, by the very terms of its law, was a rite for infants; baptism, by the terms of its law, excludes infants. So that, whether the analogy between circumcision and baptism be considered, or the points of difference between them, the institution of circumcision, instead of affording any argument for infant baptism, is a decisive refutation of it.

CHAPTER IX.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE PERPETUITY OF THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION CONSIDERED.

PEDOBAPTISTS, for the most part, affirm that the covenant of circumcision is in force in the Gospel dispensation, and its rite still remains by a substitute. Their principal arguments for this position shall now be considered.

The argument principally relied upon to prove the perpetuity of the covenant of circumcision, is based on the declaration, twice affirmed in the covenant itself, that it should be an *everlasting* covenant. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant." "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting* covenant."

If the use of the word *everlasting* in this covenant proves its perpetuity, let us see what other ancient institutions there are whose perpetuity is proved by that same word.

In the original institution of the Passover, (Ex. xii.) after minute directions are given for taking the lamb, slaying it, sprinkling the blood, roasting it in the fire, and eating it with unleavened bread, it is commanded, "You shall keep it a feast *by an ordinance* FOREVER;" the same word that in Gen. xvii. is rendered *everlasting*. After further directions it is repeated, "Ye shall observe *this day* in your generations, *by an ordinance* FOREVER." After further directions it is again repeated, "Ye shall observe this thing *for an ordinance* to thee, and to thy sons, FOREVER." To escape the obvious conclusion here, it cannot be said that the Passover had a certain typical meaning which still remains, to which the word *everlasting* or *forever* applies; for that is not what is affirmed. A particular *feast* is described, and that is required to be kept forever. A particular day in the year is pointed out, which is to be observed in a particular manner forever.

In Lev. xvi., after describing the ceremonies to be observed on the annual day of expiation, it is said, "And this shall be a statute FOREVER (the same word that is rendered *everlasting* in Gen. xvii.) unto you: *that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls and do no work at all.*" "It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls

by a statute FOREVER." "And *this* shall be an EVERLASTING statute unto you, to make an atonement for all their sins once a year." The language here applies the word everlasting specifically to *that observance of the rites of expiation once a year, and in that specific day, the tenth of the seventh month.*

Lev. vii. 35-37. "For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel, from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons, by a *statute* FOREVER. This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, which the Lord commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, by a *statute* FOREVER."

Lev. xxiii. 41-2. Of the Feast of Tabernacles it is said, "Ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year; it shall be a *statute* FOREVER in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days."

Numb. xviii. 8, 19, 23. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, behold I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings, and of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel, unto thee have I given them, and to thy sons by an *ordinance* FOREVER. All the heave offerings of the holy things which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, by a *statute* FOREVER: it is a *covenant* of salt FOREVER. It shall be a *statute* FOREVER throughout your genera-

tions, that among the children of Israel they (the Levites) have no inheritance."

Numb. xix. 10, 21. "And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be for a *statute* FOREVER. It shall be a *perpetual* (the same word that is elsewhere rendered *everlasting* and *forever*) statute, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes."

Numb. xxv. 11, 13. "Phineas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel. Wherefore say, behold I give unto him my covenant of peace. And *he* shall have it, and *his seed after him*, even the *covenant* of an EVERLASTING Priesthood."

It will thus be seen that if the use of the word *everlasting* in the covenant of circumcision will prove its perpetuity, the same word applied to the Aaronic priesthood, and to almost every institute of the Mosaic economy, will prove the perpetuity of that entire economy.

That the word *everlasting*, in Hebrew, Greek, or English, properly means *endless*, is a perfectly clear case; while, still to contend that it is never applied to subjects or facts which have a limited duration, would be a folly which would defeat its own end. The only principle on which it can be successfully interpreted is, *that it expresses a duration co-extensive with the existence of the Being, economy or dispensation, of which that which is called everlasting is an attribute or adjunct.* For example: when it is applied to

anything that pertains to the nature of God, it has its proper meaning of endless, because proper eternity belongs to God. When it is applied to anything pertaining to the future existence of the soul, it has its proper meaning of endless, because the soul is immortal. When it is applied to the Aaronic priesthood, or to any of the Mosaic institutes, it does not mean endless, but it expresses a duration as long as the typical dispensation continued, of which these were adjuncts. On this principle, to what period of time would the epithet everlasting, applied to this covenant in Gen. xvii., lead us to expect its continuance? This question is answered by ascertaining to which dispensation it belonged. I have already shown that it was an adjunct of the typical dispensation. It must then have had an existence as long as that dispensation remained. This is precisely what the word everlasting, applied to it, requires.

Ps. cv. 8, is sometimes quoted to prove the perpetuity of this covenant. "He hath remembered his covenant *forever*; the word which he commanded to a *thousand generations*." Here we may observe, (1.) The covenant stipulation which God is represented here as remembering forever, and for a thousand generations, is distinctly stated in the 11th verse, saying: "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." It must then be admitted that the word thousand here does not mean that definite number, or that God has not remembered his covenant; for Israel have been dispossessed of that land for nearly 2000 years. (2.) The

indefiniteness of the expressions, *a thousand, ten thousand, &c.*, in the poetic parts of the Old Testament, is too obvious to require any very extended remark. As examples, I will refer to the following passages: Deut. i. 11; Job ix. 3; xxxiii. 23; Ps. i. 10; lxxxiv. 10; xc. 4; xci. 7; Isa. xxx. 17; lx. 22; Lev. xxvi. 8; Deut. xxxii. 30; xxxiii. 2; Cant. v. 10. In this text and the context the word is interchanged with *forever* and *everlasting*, and is to be interpreted on the same principles.

Another argument for the perpetuity of the covenant of circumcision, is based on a misapplication of the passages in Galatians, in which the Apostle speaks of the perpetuity of the covenant of grace in Christ which was previously revealed to Abraham. That the argument may have all the benefit of a fair statement, I will transcribe it verbatim from a sermon, published by the authority of a Presbyterian Synod, before which it was delivered on a year's appointment, by Rev. Dr. White of New York.

“And besides, what saith the New Testament on this subject? Does it, or does it not recognize the Abrahamic Covenant* as still in existence and

* “Abrahamic Covenant.” How wonderful is the effect of prejudice on the perceptions of good men! The slightest inspection of the New Testament, one would suppose must show, that when the Apostles refer to the Abrahamic Covenant, they never mean the Covenant of Circumcision, but solely and invariably the Covenant of Christ; or, in other words, the promise of the Messiah given to Abraham at the time of his call, as recorded Gen. xii. 3. This promise was *renewed* after the offering of Isaac, Gen. xxii., and then *confirmed with an oath*. Hence, Paul expressly describes it

of force? We shall hear. 'Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.' These passages occur in the third chapter of Galatians.

"Now here it is expressly affirmed, that believers under the Christian dispensation, are partakers of the blessings which were promised to Abraham, and are recognized as his spiritual seed." Precisely so, I answer; and this is what proves that the infants of Gentile believers are not recognized by the Apostle as having anything

as the Covenant "in Christ," "confirmed before of God." Compare Heb. vi. 13-20. Indeed this distinctive use of the terms in question is found in Peter at the very beginning. Acts iii. 25. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." It is time that this scriptural use of terms were better understood. J. N. B.

to do with it. Infants of Gentile believers are neither of Abraham's natural seed, nor of his spiritual seed; for it is "believers" who "are recognized as his spiritual seed;" and the only way that the natural seed of believers are brought in here, is by the compound double sense of the word "seed" before illustrated. The argument refutes itself. The learned Doctor continues: "It is also expressly affirmed that Christ came in the flesh, and was crucified, not to destroy the covenant, but to fulfill its provisions, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through him.' This certainly could not be true, if the covenant had ceased to exist. And it is further expressly affirmed, that the law which was given at Sinai, could have no effect to disannul the covenant, which was 430 years older than itself, and which had been confirmed by God as a perpetual covenant. See Gen. xvii. 7." Now this certainly proves that the covenant of *which Paul speaks*, still exists, and is a perpetual covenant; and it also proves most conclusively that he is not speaking of the covenant of circumcision. He is speaking of a covenant which was revealed to Abraham 430 years before the law. But I have chronologically proved that the covenant of circumcision was not made until 406 years before the law, instead of 430. The Apostle tells us precisely what covenant he was here speaking of, in one of the verses quoted above by the Doctor: "And the Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall

all nations be blessed ;” quoting from Gen. xii. 3, and not from Gen. xvii. Then, to establish the point with entire certainty, he fixes the date of it—430 years before the law, which carries us 24 years before Gen. xvii. to the same point with his quotation, Gen. xii. 3. Can Dr. White deceive himself so much as to suppose that this covenant, 430 years before the law, has a reference to Gen. xvii. 7, to which he refers? And if he can, does he expect that everybody else will be deceived with him? None but those who wish to be.

The argument refutes itself. The fallacy is the one I exposed at length in Chapter III., to which I will again refer the reader.

The eleventh chapter of Romans is much relied upon to prove the perpetuity of the covenant of circumcision, and the identity of the church established upon it with the Gospel church. If this chapter be carefully read, it will be perceived that there is not one word said in it of any covenant with Abraham, or anybody else through him—not one word of circumcision, or of baptism, or of any church whatever. If it is said that the figure of the good olive tree indicates a church, I will ask, in the pertinent language of another,* “What organization is meant by the wild olive tree from which the Gentiles, as *branches*, are *cut off*?” The wild olive tree, by universal admission, expresses a *state* or *condition* of not being in favor with God; and the good olive tree must, by all the laws of antithesis, denote a state of favor with

* Rev. Edmund Turney, in “Scriptural Law of Baptism.”

God, which certainly does not necessarily imply a church relation. The truths, then, which particularly bear on our subject, taught by the Apostles in this chapter, are, that the Jews were cut off from the distinction of being the peculiar and favored people of God, which they had enjoyed from the time of Abraham, not because they failed in fulfilling the condition imposed in the covenant of circumcision, or the conditions super-added at Sinai—for it appears that they were then very punctilious about these, and continue to be to this day—but for UNBELIEF, (verse 20,) and the rejection of Christ; *i. e.*, for failing to see that circumcision and all the ceremonial observances were appointed as types of the true sacrifice and the spiritual church, and consequently were totally valueless after the offering of that sacrifice and the establishment of the spiritual church. If the covenant of circumcision were then in force, the observance of its conditions by the Jews, (among which there is no mention of faith,) would have secured them the advantages of still being the peculiar people of God; and the fact that they did fulfill those conditions, and yet were cut off from those privileges, proves that the covenant was *not in force*, and that being abrogated, the observance of its conditions would secure no advantage whatever. And now, the Apostle tells us, believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, enjoy this distinction, not by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, nor by baptism, whether administered in infancy or adult age, but by FAITH. “Because of *unbelief* they were broken

off, and thou standest by *faith*." So that this passage, instead of proving the perpetuity of the covenant of circumcision, and the identity of the Abrahamic with the Gospel church, proves the contrary. Up to the coming of Christ, God had determined to bless the Jews on the principles of the covenant of circumcision; after that, if he blessed them at all, it must be on other principles. The Jews obstinately adhered to the principles of that covenant, determined to be blessed *so* or not at all. The result we know. They were blessed *not at all*, instead of being blessed *so*. Are not our brethren following a dangerous precedent in their tenacious adherence to that same covenant?*

* The remarks made above will, I trust, be deemed sufficient to show that Rom. xi. will by no means sustain the position which it is brought forward to support. I am, however, so little satisfied with the views which are generally given of the verses in question, that I venture a brief exposition in addition.

Three principal points are brought out in the chapter. 1. God has not utterly cast off Israel, but will eventually bring them into a state of favor with himself on the principles of the gospel. 2. That event will be a great blessing to the Gentile world. 3. Believing Gentiles have no reason to exult over them in their depressed state as unbelievers.

The bearing of the first ten verses on the first of these points is sufficiently obvious to need no remark. The second begins to appear at the 11th verse: "I say, then, have they stumbled that they should fall" irrecoverably? "God forbid! But rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy;" *i. e.* provoke the Jews to emulation, that they, by believing, may obtain the same privileges. Verse 12: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" See Luke xxiv. 47; Acts iii. 26; Rom. i. 16; Acts xiii. 46. The 15th verse states in stronger terms the advantages which the Gentile world may expect to

CHAPTER X.

THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION ABROGATED.

THAT the Covenant of Circumcision has expired, and its rite is totally abolished, its typical signification only remaining, is implied in many of the arguments already advanced. Still, that the point may be rendered perfectly clear, it may be desirable to have the arguments which establish it presented by themselves in consecutive order.

When I admit that the typical signification of the rite of circumcision remains, I do not wish

receive from the conversion of the Jews. The 16th verse gives a reason why this may be expected. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Here are two comparisons to express the same thing, and their members correspond each to each. "First fruit," in the first comparison, is equivalent to "root" in the second. In like manner, "lump," in the first, is equivalent to "branches" in the second. The Apostle shows that great advantages may be expected to flow to the world at large from the conversion of the body of the Jews, by the great benefits the Gentiles had already received from the first conversions from them. In the first comparison, these early conversions are denoted by the "first fruit," while the mass of the nation converted are denoted by "the lump." Again, these early conversions, as related to the body of the nation when converted, are as the "root" to the "branches." Now these early conversions were holy, in the strict sense of the word. They were consecrated to God. God accepted them, and made them the instruments of unspeakable blessings to the world. From them came the Apostles, and the first martyrs, and all the honored heralds of salvation of the first age of the Church. The writers of the Gospels and Epistles were Jews. If they then, the first fruit and the root, were thus accepted

that to be understood as any exception to the total abrogation of the covenant and the rite. The typical meaning of the Aaronic priesthood remains; the priesthood itself is abolished. The

of God, and made the means of such blessings to the world, what might not be expected when the mass of the nation should be converted, and as the "lump" and the "branches" be consecrated to God? It would be to the world "like life from the dead."

Here, on this word "branches," the Apostle makes his transition from his second to his third point, viz., the caution to believing Gentiles not to boast against the Jews, even in their unbelieving and depressed state; and had he constructed his discourse on artificial principles he could not have made his transition more easily and elegantly than he does by introducing this figure. His discourse turns upon it as upon a smooth, well-polished hinge. As the mass of the Jews, when they shall be converted, are considered as bearing to the first believers, who were Jews, the relation of branches to a root, so the unbelieving Jews are considered as bearing to them the relation of branches *broken off*. The Apostles were directed to begin their labors with the Jews. They did so, and continued them till their rejection of the Gospel and the persecution of the saints scattered them abroad, and paved the way for the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. Thus both the facts spoken of in this chapter took place at once. They were "broken off" because of unbelief" from the privilege which their original relation to God secured them, and their fall became the riches of the world. The Apostle proceeds, modifying the sense of the word "branches" to the degree and in the manner I have explained above, (verses 17, 18). "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." That is, the Jews owe you nothing, but you owe them everything. Christ, the Apostles, and the ministers by whom ye believed were Jews: they, as the root, bear you, not you them. Ver. 19, 20, 23. "Thou wilt say then," I have reason to boast, for "the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken

typical meaning of the Passover remains; the Passover itself is abolished. The typical meaning of the ceremonial sacrifices remains; the sacrifices are abolished. So the typical meaning of circumcision remains; circumcision itself is abolished, and the covenant has expired.

1. By the advent of Christ, the covenant of circumcision expired by its own limitation. Is it asked how shall we know what its limitation was? I answer, we may know both by its nature, and the purpose to be accomplished by it. In its nature it is a part of the law. It is conceived in a legal spirit, and expressed in legal terms. Its nature and spirit are such that it could not exist under a dispensation of grace and faith. When that dispensation was introduced it must have expired.

Its purpose was accomplished by the death of Christ. What was its purpose? It was to keep the nation of Israel distinct from all other nations, until Christ the promised seed of Abraham should come, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. This was necessary in order that Christ might appear distinctly and plainly before

off, and thou standest by faith. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

The only reference or allusion in this chapter to Abraham, the covenant of circumcision, or the former ecclesiastical state of the Jews, consists in the implication that the Jews had been the favored people of God. The good olive tree represents the privileges which flow from the Gospel, through faith, including those of the visible Gospel church, not the Abrahamic church, nor indeed any church, to the exclusion of other spiritual blessings.

the world. And the three things provided in this covenant kept them distinct : first, God was in a peculiar sense their God ; secondly, they had the land of Canaan to dwell in, which prevented their being scattered among the nations ; thirdly, the rite of circumcision gave them an additional peculiarity, further tending to the same result. But when Christ came, all the objects of the covenant being accomplished, it necessarily expired.

2. The nature and constitution of the Church founded on the covenant of circumcision, is totally distinct from the Gospel Church, and opposed to it in every particular. The one was a National Church ; the other a " kingdom not of this world." The one was entered by the natural birth ; the other requires the spiritual birth as a prerequisite for admission. The one insists on outward forms only ; the other requires spiritual worship. The one requires ceremonial purity only ; the other holiness of heart. So different are they, that they cannot co-exist, except as antagonists. If God established them both, he must have removed the one, before he established the other.

I would be far from affirming that God did not as truly require holiness of heart in the ancient, as in the Gospel dispensation. He has in all ages, and under all dispensations, required of men, repentance, faith, holiness of heart, and spiritual worship. But I affirm that he did not require these in the ancient dispensation, as *conditions of church membership*. Joab, for aught that appears, was in as good standing in the Jewish Church as

David was, though the one was a child of God, and the other the child of the Devil.

3. I have shown from direct Scripture testimony, that the covenant of circumcision was an essential part of the ceremonial law of Moses. But that law was abrogated by the death of Christ, with all its appendages.

4. I have shown that the covenant of circumcision was identical with the Old Covenant, in distinction from the New. But Paul informs us in the 8th chapter of Hebrews, that the old covenant is done away.

5. In the *opening* of the gospel dispensation, under the preaching of John, the abrogation of the covenant of circumcision is, to say the least, pretty strongly intimated. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." Now this is aimed directly at the covenant of circumcision. The plea of any title to religious privileges on the ground of descent from Abraham, has its original foundation on that covenant. The Baptist, by pronouncing the plea no longer valid, establishes equally the invalidity of the covenant on which the plea is founded.

6. When the gospel dispensation was fully introduced and the Gospel Church set up, the principles of the covenant of circumcision were entirely repudiated. No person, by virtue of parentage, or descent from Abraham, or any body else, was admitted to its privileges. The great Commission excluded from baptism all who were not disciples,

and on these principles the Apostles uniformly acted.

7. The Apostles, in full council, decided that the covenant of circumcision is not in force in the Christian Church. This is an important and decisive fact, and is worthy of careful attention. The account of it is contained in Acts xv. The first five verses state the controversy, in which we find that the Judaizing teachers enforced upon the Gentile converts circumcision and the observance of the law of Moses, as parts of one system, based upon the same authority, and standing or falling together. We find, from the recorded opinions of Peter and James, that the Apostles also regarded them as parts of one system, based upon the same authority, and therefore decided that they could not be enforced upon Gentile Christians. And this was a virtual prohibition upon the whole church, unless it be supposed that God designed that there should be a permanent distinction in the church between Jews and Gentiles; which I think few will contend for in the light of such passages as the following—Eph. ii. 14–18. Col. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 26, 29.

The fact that the Jewish converts practised circumcision in the apostolic age, does not affect this argument. There were many reasons existing why the Jewish converts did not at once forsake their old ritual. Under the circumstances this was hardly to be expected. The Apostles themselves were full of Jewish prejudices when they began their work, and it was not without much instruction of the Holy Spirit, added to much study and

observation, that they were able to surmount them; could their converts, without those advantages, be expected at once to rise above such prejudices?

It should also be kept in mind, that not only was the observance of circumcision permitted to the Jewish converts, *but this permission also extended to the entire ceremonial law.* This is clear from the passage now under consideration, and chap. xx. 20, 21, is still clearer to the same point. If then, this apostolic permission to the Jewish converts, of adhering to circumcision, is proof that it was not abrogated, the same permission in regard to the entire ceremonial law, is proof that that also was not abolished by the death of Christ. If the fact that Paul circumcised Timothy, (Acts xvi. 3,) is proof that the covenant of circumcision remained in force, the fact that he shaved his head in Cenchrea, (xviii. 18,) and that he went to Jerusalem to the Temple to fulfill a vow and bring sacrifices, (xxi. 24, 26,) will prove that the sacrificial laws of Moses remained in force. The truth is, we are not to consider that the Jewish dispensation continued in full force up to a certain time, then suddenly ceased, and the full day of the Gospel dispensation at once succeeded it. They *overlap* each other somewhat. The Jewish dispensation certainly continued in force until the death of Christ, and the gospel sun did not rise until after that event; yet the gospel day dawned with the ministry of John. And as the morning twilight of the gospel day began before the death of Christ, so some shades of the Jewish night, or rather morning clouds and mists, might be expected

to remain some time after that, hovering about that solemn and splendid Temple, affecting in a certain degree the minds, and obscuring the perceptions of Jewish Christians while it stood.

8. If the covenant of circumcision were still in force, how could Paul write as he did in the Epistle to the Galatians? What powerful reasoning, what strong invective, what vehement expostulation, does he direct both against the rite of circumcision, and against the principles on which the rite is founded! Thus (chap. i. 6, 7,) he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from the grace of him that called you, into another gospel. Which is not another, (*i. e.* is not a gospel); but there are some that *trouble you*, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."—Chap. v. 11, 12. "And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which *trouble you*."—Chap. vi. 11, 12. "Ye see how large a letter I have written to you with mine own hand. *As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised.*" These passages show against whom, and what, the Epistle is directed. Hear him further, chap. iii. 1, 3: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you! Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Again, in the fourth chapter, he begins an expostulation which continues through that chapter, and extends into the next. Verse 9: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, *how turn ye*

again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage?" Ver. 19, 21 : "My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" He then introduces the allegory of Hagar and Sarah, and their sons, quotes the direction to "cast out the bond-woman and her son," and adds, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. (Compare Acts xv. 10.) *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.* For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that *he is a debtor to do the whole law.*"

It is truly a matter of astonishment that any man can read the Epistle to the Galatians, and yet gravely affirm that the covenant of circumcision is still in force, and is the covenant of grace. Paul's reasonings are directed as much against the principles on which the rite is founded, as against the rite itself.

Is it said, that Paul's arguments are directed against the rite as founded on the Mosaic law, and not as founded on the covenant in Gen. xvii. ? The answer is obvious. Was the rite of circumcision founded on the covenant in Gen. xvii., or was it not? Everybody responds, it was. Will then any one contend that Paul represents the

case contrary to the very letter of scripture? But you insist, Paul does represent it as founded on the Mosaic law. True, and yet the fact is indisputable that it was founded on the covenant in Gen. xvii. It is not even re-enacted any where else. Now, unless the Covenant in Gen. xvii. and the Mosaic law are inseparable parts of one system, so that when the last is mentioned the first is included, Paul stands convicted of representing this matter contrary to the very letter of scripture.

9. In the second chapter of Colossians, Paul declares that Christ blotted out the covenant of circumcision, and nailed it to his cross. He begins at the 8th verse, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, *after the tradition of men*, after the rudiments (the same word is translated "elements" in Gal. iv. 9, "beggarly elements,") of the world, *and not after Christ*. And ye are complete in him, in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands;" as much as to say ye have no need of the Jewish circumcision which is made with hands. "And you, being dead in your sins and the *uncircumcision of your flesh*, hath he quickened together with him—*blotting out the handwriting* [written code] *of ordinances that was against us, that was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*" That the covenant of circumcision is included in this "handwriting of ordinances," is plain from the connection. That covenant was contrary to them, because it was a charter of peculiar privileges to Jews. And Paul informs them that since Christ had blotted

it out, and took it out of the way, and nailed it to his cross, the way was open for their being quickened together with him, notwithstanding they were dead in sins, and the *uncircumcision of their flesh, i. e.* had never received the Jewish rite of circumcision. The handwriting, that is, the covenant, or law of circumcision is, with all the typical ordinances, *blotted out, and* NAILED TO THE CROSS. Is it well to attempt to restore it?

10. In Eph. ii. 11–15, Paul declares that Christ has *abolished* in his flesh, the ordinance or covenant of circumcision. “Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called *uncircumcision* by that which is called the *circumcision* in the flesh made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath *broken down the middle wall of partition* between us, having *abolished* in his flesh the enmity, even *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*, for to make in himself of twain, *one new man*, so making peace.” Now the Apostle declares that whatever ordinances tended to separate Jews and Gentiles, Christ abolished. And every ordinance that indicated that the Jews had any peculiar privileges as a nation, was a middle wall of partition. And of all the Jewish ordinances, none indicated this more clearly than

circumcision. This is expressed in the eleventh verse. The covenant of circumcision was the first charter of peculiar privileges to the Jews. And if the *ordinance* of circumcision was abolished, *the covenant* of circumcision was, for in no other place in the five books of Moses is circumcision *ordained* as a general law to Israel, than in Gen. xvii., where it is a *covenant*.

CHAPTER XI.

CIRCUMCISION HAS NO SUBSTITUTE.

PEDOBAPTISTS generally admit that circumcision is abolished, but they also claim that when it was abolished; baptism was introduced as its substitute. It is surprising that this assertion should be so often made, in regard to a point which ought to have clear scripture proof, and so little attempt be made to produce any. Dr. White, in his sermon before referred to, makes the assertion as usual, without referring to a single text to support it. The substance of his argument is the following: "The seal of a covenant is no part of the covenant itself; it is a mere appendage, wholly distinct from the compact which it ratifies. It is liable, therefore, to be separated from it; to be removed or changed; and that too when no change takes place in the covenant itself. There is a manifest reason why circumcision should pass away with the law of ceremonies; but is there

any reason why the covenant should be left without a token or seal? We surely know of none. If the original seal is removed, we look for another in its place. Has the covenant then a new seal? Upon this point, among Christians, there happens to be no dispute. Baptism is universally received by those who do not deny the existence of all external ordinances, as the sign and badge of the righteousness of faith, or of a Christian profession under the new dispensation. Is it asked, does it take the place of circumcision? We answer, no denomination of evangelical Christians uses it for any other purpose."

Here are almost as many errors as there are lines. In the first place, it is assumed that the terms "token" and "seal" are synonymous. I have shown that they are not, (pp. 65, 66). Again, it is assumed that circumcision was the *seal* of the Abrahamic covenant. I have shown that it was a seal of no covenant, but of the righteousness of Abraham's faith. Then it is said that the seal of a covenant is no part of the covenant itself; it is a mere appendage, liable to be separated from it, to be removed or changed. Now it would certainly have done something towards strengthening this position, had Dr. White produced an example of what he affirms generally of covenants. From all the covenants which God has ever made with men, not a single example of a change of the seal or token can be produced, unless the one under consideration furnish one. Then, if from an examination of the different covenants which God has made with men, the general prin-

ciple had been established, that the token or seal is no part of the covenant itself, but a mere appendage, how could this be affirmed of the covenant in Gen. xvii., in the face of the express terms of it? "Thou shalt keep my covenant. This is my covenant which ye shall keep; every man child among you shall be circumcised. My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." How in the face of these express declarations any man can affirm that circumcision is *no part* of the covenant, but a mere appendage, is certainly beyond ordinary comprehension. Again he asks, "Is there any reason why the covenant should be left without a token or seal?" No one claims that it was left without a token. God declared that the rite of circumcision, as its token, should be coeval with the covenant itself, and it was. Both passed away at once. Again he assumes that there is no dispute among Christians that baptism is a new seal of the old Abrahamic covenant! A Professor of Theology in New York as ignorant as this of the views of Christians all around him! Again, he assumes that the sign and badge of the righteousness of faith, is the same thing as a sign and badge of a Christian profession. The reputation of the Union Theological Seminary is a sufficient guarantee, that Dr. White's theological instruction is not all as loose-jointed as this. Again he says, "Is it asked, does baptism take the place of

circumcision? We answer, no denomination of Christians uses it for any other purpose." What an assertion! Does not Dr. White know that one denomination of Christians uses baptism for some other purpose than as a substitute for circumcision? viz., for the same purposes that the Apostles did—as a symbol of the burial and resurrection of Christ, of the believer's separation from sin, and of his future resurrection from the dead and eternal glorification. Rom. vi. 3.

This is the substance of Dr. White's argument to prove that baptism is the substitute of circumcision. Not a text of Scripture does he quote.

There is a text, however, usually quoted to prove this point. It is Col. ii. 11, 12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God." Now I cannot help remarking that our brethren must be in an unpleasant dilemma on this text. In order to make it say anything at all on the question whether baptism is a substitute for circumcision, they must admit that it speaks of literal water baptism. But this cuts off their favorite sprinkling; for the baptism here is immersion, and can be nothing else—*"buried with him in baptism wherein ye also are risen with him."* To escape this consequence, they are obliged to deny that the reference is to literal baptism; and then it is of no use to them on the question of the substitute. If spiritual baptism

although it is a mere figure yet it represents
 to burial in the ground - see 1st vs 1st plants

is here referred to, *i. e.* spiritual renovation, (which I do not admit) the text, if it prove anything with respect to a substitute, will prove that spiritual renovation is the substitute of spiritual renovation! What the text, however, actually proves, as every plain reader can see, is, that Christian circumcision, the circumcision *made without hands*, *i. e.* spiritual renovation, is an essential pre-requisite to Christian baptism, which is immersion. This is precisely what the text proves. It meets at once *both* the errors of Pedobaptists on the subject of baptism.*

* Lest I should be thought not to have given the Pedobaptist argument all the advantage of a fair statement, I will make an extract from another late writer, Rev. Dr. Peters. After quoting Rom. iv. 11, he adds, "There are numerous *other* passages (as if the one he had quoted had anything to do with the subject) which show that baptism, under the Gospel, takes the place of circumcision under the law. 'Beware of the concision,' says Paul, *i. e.* beware of those persons who lay great stress on the rite of circumcision, 'for we,' *i. e.* we who have been baptized, 'are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit.'" Let the reader mark, Paul does not say, *we who have been baptized*, but *we who worship God in the Spirit*, are the circumcision. Dr. Peters might as well have quoted any other text as this to prove his point.

[It is worthy of remark, also, that if the interpretation of Dr. Peters were correct, the text would be still a fatal one to Infant Baptism. For if all the baptized "worshipped God in the Spirit," then *infants* who are incapable of this, *were not baptized*. Thus "error is fated to run crooked," and to cross itself in perpetual contradictions.—J. N. B.]

He continues: "Again he says in Col. ii. 11, 12, 'Ye are circumcised,' &c., (quoting the entire passage.) The meaning is, in other words, that *having been baptized spiritually, ye are thereby circumcised spiritually!*" Who denies that spiritual baptism involves spiritual circumcision? But what proof does that afford that outward baptism is a substitute for outward circumcision? These are all the "numerous other passages" he quotes.

I have given all the texts I ever saw or heard quoted, to prove that baptism is the substitute of circumcision. But this is not all that the Bible says about it. On the contrary, it affords the clearest proof that baptism cannot be the substitute of circumcision.

In the first place we may repeat the observation before made, that the covenant, in Gen. xvii. in its very terms, absolutely prohibits the observance of any other rite than circumcision, as its token, while it remains. This rite is stated to be *the covenant* which those who are entitled to its promises should keep. “*This is my covenant which ye shall keep—every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant.*” The same word everlasting, which, as our brethren say, establishes the perpetuity of the covenant, is also applied to this rite. “*My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.*” According to the very terms of the covenant, the rite of circumcision must be coeval with the covenant itself. Both are called everlasting. *There is no possibility of a substitute under the covenant.*

2. If, as our brethren affirm, the covenant of circumcision is still in force—if the Gospel Church is the same with the Jewish Church—if the principles on which the Jewish Church was founded, are established in the Gospel Church, the only difference being the substitution of one external rite for another, which holds precisely the place of the first, then all that is said in the New Tes-

tament against the observance of circumcision—all the reasonings and exhortations of Paul against it, apply with their full weight against infant baptism. Our brethren have taken their position directly in the range of Paul's artillery in Galatians, levelled against the Judaizing teachers, and they cannot escape its effect. The reasonings of Paul, though directed against the rite of circumcision, were still more directed against the principles on which it was founded. Can it be credited that he would reason thus against those principles, if they were the very principles on which the Church of Christ was founded?—and against that rite, if Christianity had established a rite precisely equivalent, upon the same principles, and holding precisely the same place?

3. If baptism were a substitute for circumcision, something clear and unambiguous must have been said about it in the New Testament. On this point I have a right to speak with entire confidence. The circumstances of the Church, as they are presented in the Acts and Epistles, were such as to render silence in regard to such a fact as this, on the part of the Apostles, absolutely impossible. There was a schism between the Jewish and Gentile Christians on this very question—a schism which it would have been perfectly easy to heal by just insisting that baptism takes the place of circumcision, while the covenant was still in force, with such "*enlargement of privilege,*" as might be expected in the Gospel dispensation. If this were so, Paul could not have failed to mention it in the Epistle to the Gala-

tians. Not a word here about a substitute, but everything making against such a supposition. If it were so, it could not have failed of a distinct mention in the Apostolic Council assembled at Jerusalem, to consider this question of the application of circumcision to the Gentiles. (Acts xv.) Indeed, if this were so, how could there have been any schism? How could such a question ever have been mooted? Did not the Apostles know all about it? Did they not instruct the early disciples, both Jews and Gentiles, in all that pertained to Christianity? If baptism held precisely the place of circumcision, as the "seal" of the covenant, the covenant itself remaining in full force, who could have imagined that those who had been baptized must also be circumcised? Who would have thought of two "seals" at the same time of the same covenant?

If, however, in some unaccountable manner, a general ignorance prevailed in the Church in regard to this simple A B C truth of the gospel, (as it is esteemed by our brethren,) how could the Apostles have failed in that Council to have given them the instruction they needed? How could James, when he gave his opinion, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles have turned to God," have failed to give this plain reason, that since baptism is now the appointed seal of the covenant instead of circumcision, to impose circumcision upon them would be inconsistent and absurd? Would not Dr. White or Dr. Peters have said something of this kind if they had stood

one in the place of James, and the other in the place of Peter? I affirm, then, and I am certain that I have the common sense of every reader with me, that if this position of our brethren were correct, there could have been no schism or dissension in the Church similar to that brought to view in the 15th of Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians; or if, by any unaccountable ignorance, such a schism had arisen, in attempting to heal it this thing must have been distinctly stated. And since not the least intimation is given of any such thing, the inference is irresistible that nothing of the kind is true.

4. There is one passage which puts an absolute and decisive negative upon this question. It is in Acts xxi. 20, 21, 25, where James and the Elders at Jerusalem say to Paul, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe NO SUCH THING, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." But, I ask, did they not teach the Gentiles to observe *baptism*, which, according to our brethren, is substantially THE SAME THING with circumcision, a token and seal of the same covenant, its appointed substitute, to be applied to the same

description of persons, founded on the same law, and occupying the same place in the Divine economy? And could they do that, and then say that they had commanded the Gentiles that they observe NO SUCH THING as circumcision?*

RECAPITULATION AND RESULT.

I HERE close my examination of the Covenant of Circumcision. I have shown from its nature that it cannot be the Covenant of Grace; that it is legal in its form and in its spirit, a part of the Mosaic economy, and identical with the Old Covenant. I have shown that its blessings are mainly national and external, and in no sense spiritual and new-covenant blessings. I have shown that its rite is a positive ordinance, to be kept as it is commanded, or not at all. I have shown the uses of the rite of circumcision, from none of which baptism can be inferred; and lastly, I have shown that the covenant has expired, and that its rite is abolished without any substitute. We come then inevitably to the conclusion arrived at

* "When the ancient *sign and seal* of the covenant which God made with his people for an everlasting covenant was abolished, another ordinance was instituted *in the same church, under the same covenant, of precisely the same import, and for the same purpose.*"—Dr. Peters. The italics are his.

before by many of the most eminent biblical scholars of the age, that "*the Abrahamic Covenant furnishes no ground for Infant Baptism.*"*

* Prof. Stuart's Manuscript Lectures on Gal. iii., cited in Jewett on Baptism.

It is a fact worthy of notice, that while such divines as Dr. Emmons, Dr. Bushnell, and Dr. Halley of London, agree with Prof. Stuart that "the covenant of circumcision furnishes no ground for infant baptism," Dr. Chalmers declares it as his opinion that "*here lies the main strength of the argument for infant baptism*"—*Lectures on Romans* xiv. Had this excellent man, whose sudden death all deplore, as they admire the rich productions of his sanctified genius, allowed his mind to descend from vague but specious generalizations to a rigid examination of facts, on this subject and on that of Church Establishments, there is little reason to doubt that his candor would in both cases have yielded its willing confession of involuntary error. He would have then seen that "the stamp of presumptuous innovation" is impressed, not upon the course of those who adhere to the commanded baptism of believers, but upon those who *presume* to apply it without the slightest scriptural authority to any other class of persons; and he would have gladly added one or two fresh flowers to that wreath of honor, which, at the close of the very Lecture above named, he has generously twined around the brows of the Baptists of England.—J. N. B.

PART II.

INFANT BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW TESTAMENT ARGUMENT FOR INFANT BAPTISM CONSIDERED.

FROM the manner in which most Pedobaptist writers reason on the subject of infant baptism, it is clear that they have little confidence in the New Testament argument, considered by itself, in its favor. It is not probable that they would claim any argument for it in the New Testament, if it were not for the views maintained respecting the covenant of circumcision, which have been refuted in the preceding pages; and the supposed evidence of the existence of the rite in the Church, in the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic. It is freely conceded by all writers, so far as I know, that there is no command for it in the New Testament. Says Dr. Woods, "It is plain that there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our sacred writings." Says Prof. Stuart, "Commands, or plain and certain examples rela-

tive to it, I do not find." Many other writers confess this with equal ingenuousness. They assume that the principle of the thing is settled by the Abrahamic Covenant, and then claim that all that ought to be expected in the New Testament is that the subject obscurely appear there in an allusive or incidental way.

On this scheme several passages in the New Testament are quoted, which, it is supposed, harmonize with this view of the Covenant of Circumcision, and so are to be relied on as collateral proofs. But if this view of the covenant of circumcision is radically erroneous, as I have shown, all support from these passages must fail. It is only from this point of view that there is any plausibility in the argument drawn from these passages. Indeed, viewing them from the Pedobaptist stand-point, there is so little plausibility in this application of these passages, that, comparing one writer with another, we find all argument from them given up. No one writer surrenders them all; but one writer surrenders a part, another writer another part, and so among the different writers they are all surrendered, and the argument for infant baptism in any of them is refuted.

And with good reason. What theologian or expositor of the Scriptures, if he had not a case to make out, would adduce the fact that Christ encouraged infants to be brought to him for his blessing, as an argument for applying to them a rite which, in the very nature of it, must depend upon a positive command? Who again would

bring the passage in Acts ii. 39, "For the promise is unto you and to your children," when it is so clear from the connection that the Apostle is speaking of no promise but that of the Holy Ghost? when it is so clear, too, that no unconscious infants were baptized on that occasion, but those only who "gladly received his word were baptized." Dr. Barnes expresses his decided opinion that this passage is wholly misapplied when brought in support of infant baptism.

As little to the purpose is the case of the three households whose baptism is mentioned in the New Testament—those of Lydia and the jailer, at Philippi, and Stephanas, at Corinth. Before any argument for infant baptism can be legitimately founded on these cases, it is necessary to show that there were persons in those households of an age too tender to admit of their exercising faith, which is so plainly impossible that no one has ever attempted it. Besides, the examples themselves furnish a refutation of any argument drawn from them in support of infant baptism. That the household of Stephanas were all believers, is clear from 1 Cor. xvi. 15. That the same was true of the household of the jailer, is plainer from the history, as Doddridge and Bloomfield admit. That Lydia was the mother of a young family is incredible, when we bear in mind that she was three hundred miles from home, beyond sea, engaged in mercantile pursuits. And that her household were believers immediately after their baptism, seems evident from Acts xvi. 40; a pretty clear proof that they were before.

An argument for infant baptism is frequently drawn from 1 Cor. vii. 14. Dr. Wall makes much of it. But it would seem that its weakness must be apparent to every reader of it. Every one can see that if it establishes the right of children to baptism on the faith of one believing parent, it equally establishes the right to baptism of an unbelieving husband or wife, on the faith of the believing husband or wife. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," or sanctified—the word in the original being of precisely the same import with that which is rendered "sanctified" in relation to the husband and wife. Prof. Stuart shows this, and admits that it affords no argument for infant baptism. Dr. Barnes expresses himself decidedly and strongly against arguing for infant baptism from this passage. See his note on the passage, in his Com. on 1 Cor. Indeed it would seem that the remark of Dr. Barnes would suggest itself to every reader of the passage: "There is not one word about baptism here; not one allusion to it; nor does the argument in the remotest degree bear upon it. The question was not whether children should be baptized, but it was whether there should be a separation between man and wife, where one was a Christian and the other not."

In connection with these passages, the remarks of that critical and standard ecclesiastical historian, Neander, in his "Planting and Training of the Church," are worthy of careful attention.

“As baptism was closely united with a conscious entrance on Christian communion, faith and baptism were always connected with one another; and thus it is in the highest degree probable that baptism was performed only in instances where both could meet together, and that the practice of infant baptism was unknown at this period (viz. the Apostolic age). We cannot infer the existence of infant baptism from the baptism of whole families, for the passage in 1 Cor. xvi. 15, shows the fallacy of such a conclusion, as from that it appears that the whole family of Stephanas, who were baptized by Paul, consisted of adults. That not till so late a period as (at least certainly not earlier than) Irenæus, a trace of infant baptism appears, and that it first became recognized as an Apostolical tradition in the course of the *third* century, is evidence rather *against* than *for* the admission of its Apostolical origin; especially since in the spirit of the age when Christianity appeared, there were many elements which must have been favourable to the introduction of infant baptism. And if we wish to ascertain from whom such an institution was originated, we should say, certainly not immediately from Christ himself. Was it from the Primitive Church in Palestine, from an injunction given by the earlier Apostles? But among the Jewish Christians, circumcision was held as a seal of the covenant, and hence they had so much less occasion to make use of another dedication for their children. Could it then have been Paul, who first among Gentile Christians

introduced this alteration in the use of baptism? He who says of himself that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the Gospel; he who always kept his eye fixed on one thing, justification by faith, and so carefully avoided everything which could give a handle or support to the notion of a justification by outward things, how could he have set up infant baptism against the circumcision that continued to be practised by the Jewish Christians? In this case, the dispute carried on with the Judaizing party, on the necessity of circumcision, would easily have given an opportunity of introducing this substitute into the controversy, if it had really existed. The evidence arising *from silence on this topic has therefore the greater weight.*"

In connection with the foregoing remarks, the following, from the same author, quoted from one of his lectures by Rev. Dr. Sears, in the *Christian Review*, Vol. 3, are worthy of consideration.

"Can infant baptism be proved to be Apostolical?"

"Catholics resort to *tradition* to prove it; but Protestants have rejected the authority of tradition. Hence the Reformers, in 1521, were brought into difficulty in regard to it. *As they were accustomed to the practice, they made an attempt to prove it from Scripture*; and in the 16th, 17th, and partly in the 18th centuries, false arguments were employed in support of it, till, at length, Rationalism led to a more candid examination of the subject. The arguments were the following:

“1. *Whole families were baptized in the Primitive Church.* But there may have been no infants in those families; children may have reached the age of maturity.

“2. *Christ commanded, without limitation, to baptize all.* The command might indeed be so understood, were it not added μαθητευειν, διδασκειν, *make disciples, teach,* which cannot apply to infants.

“3. *Christ said, Suffer little children to come unto me.* But this has nothing to do with a conscious reception of the sign of regeneration.

“4. *Infant baptism has come in the place of circumcision.* But there is a difference between the two dispensations. In the Mosaic dispensation, the theocracy was designed for a particular nation, and was *hereditary.* An external sign could, therefore, be applied to those who were members of the theocracy *by birth.* But in the Christian dispensation, it is wholly different; the participation must be *internal,* a free, conscious reception, a regeneration, of which baptism is the sign. Hence the *difference* in the two dispensations shows of itself, that baptism presupposes an *internal change.*”

CHAPTER II.

INFANT BAPTISM, IF NOT COMMANDED IN THE
WORD OF GOD, IS FORBIDDEN.

I HAVE already shown that most Pedobaptist writers concede that the Bible contains no command expressly enjoining infant baptism. Some go so far as to claim that the demand for such an express requirement is unreasonable.*

But *is* this demand unreasonable? On the contrary, is it not the ground which every Christian should take, and strenuously insist upon, to admit no religious rite, without a peremptory challenge for its authority; and to admit none, without express Divine command, or clear Apostolical precedent, whatever other claims it may put forth? If the history of the Church teaches any lesson, this is written as with a sunbeam.

If infant baptism be a duty, it is a positive duty. All must admit that it is not a moral duty. It does not "arise out of the nature of the case, prior to external command," the terms in which Bishop Butler defines moral duties. But if not a moral duty, it is a positive duty. Will any one join issue with Bishop Butler in the following proposition: "Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but *from external command*; NOR WOULD THEY BE DUTIES AT ALL, WERE IT NOT FOR SUCH COMMAND,

* Dr. Peters on Baptism, p. 160.

RECEIVED FROM HIM WHOSE CREATURES AND SUBJECTS WE ARE.”* This is our position in relation to infant baptism; it cannot be a duty without express command or clear inspired precedent. Of those who would impose it upon us, we demand that express authority, and whoever claims that we are unreasonable in that demand, must join issue with Bishop Butler in the declaration above.

How earnestly Baxter pleads for the same principle, in the following words: “Who knows what will please God but himself? And has he not told us what he expects of us? Can that be obedience which has no command for it? Is not this to supererogate, and to be righteous overmuch? Is not this to accuse God’s ordinances of insufficiency, as well as his word; as if they were not sufficient to please him, or help our own graces? O the pride of man’s heart, that instead of being a law-obeyer, will be a law-maker!”

But I do not base this principle on the authority of Butler, or Baxter, or a score of others whom I might quote, who state it as distinctly and strongly as they have. In Col. ii. 20–22, the principle is clearly laid down, *that all religious rites not expressly required, are forbidden*. “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in it, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men?” This principle is a broad one, covering all religious rites, infant bap-

* Analogy, Part 2, Chap. I.

tism with the rest. Christians are here expressly required not to be subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men. Infant baptism is maintained as an *ordinance* binding on the Church. If so, it must have had an *ordainer*. But it is admitted that God has not commanded it, and that there is no clear Apostolical precedent for it. But if God has not commanded it, it is a commandment of men, and we are forbidden to be subject to any such ordinances. It is forbidden in the next verse as *will worship*; *i. e.* those who practice religious rites not commanded of God, worship God according to their own will, and not according to his will.

We are sometimes asked for an express prohibition of infant baptism. As well might the Pharisees have asked where in the Old Testament were their traditions expressly forbidden. The Bible must have been a large book to have prohibited in terms every false notion the human mind might conceive, down to the end of time; and the Catholic has as good a right to demand a prohibition of holy water, and the sign of the cross, or of auricular confession, as the Protestant Pedobaptist has, to demand a prohibition of infant baptism. But by this one principle not only infant baptism, but infant communion, invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, the use of holy water, the sign of the cross and anointing with oil in baptism, auricular confession, penances and pilgrimages—in short, all religious rites not commanded—are forbidden. Dr. Sherlock, answering such a claim made by Catholics in his day, says,

“They make the demand with just as much reason as if one should tell me that by the laws of England, every man is bound to marry at twenty years old ; and when I desire him to show me the law which makes this necessary, he should answer, though he cannot show me such a law, yet it may be necessary, unless I can show him a law which expressly declares it is not necessary. Whereas nothing is necessary but what the *law* makes so ; and if the law has not made it necessary, there is no need of any law to declare that it is not necessary.”

CHAPTER III.

INFANT BAPTISM DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO THE BAPTISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE COMMISSION.

PROBABLY most Protestants will admit that the principle enunciated in the extract from Dr. Sherlock, is a correct one, and the only one that will suffice to guard the church against the introduction of unauthorized rites. Indeed, it is but another form of stating the principle laid down in Col. ii. 20, 22. According to it, the *simple silence* of the scriptures in relation to any religious rite is a condemnation of it, from which there is no appeal. But the case against infant baptism is stronger than this. Not merely is the New Testament silent in regard to it ; not merely is it

condemned by the general principle already stated ; it is contrary to the instructions of the New Testament in relation to baptism. It is inconsistent with the declared principles of the New Testament ordinance, and is subversive of them.

It is fair to presume that the baptisms recorded in the New Testament, were administered in agreement with the New Testament Law of baptism. And if we examine historically the New Testament accounts of that ordinance, we shall find that in every case recorded, *baptism was the voluntarily assumed badge of discipleship, implying the individual profession of repentance and faith.* Thus John's baptism was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and all who were baptized by him confessed their sins. Mark i. 4, 5. Peter's direction on the day of Pentecost was, "Repent and be baptized;" and "they that gladly received his word were baptized." Acts ii. 38, 41. When the Samaritans *believed*, they were baptized, *both men and women.* Acts viii. 12. The Eunuch confessed his faith before he was baptized. Ver. 36-38. The Gentiles at Cæsarea received the Holy Ghost before they were baptized. Acts x. The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized. Acts xviii. 8. And that the households at Philippi are no exceptions to this general rule, has already been shown.

Furthermore, infant baptism stands opposed to the very terms of the Law of Christian baptism. This is contained in the last Commission, as given by Matthew—"Go ye, disciple (*μαθητεύσατε*) all nations, baptizing them into, (*εις*) the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;” and by Mark—“ Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be damned.”

The language of this Commission is so plain, that it would seem that the unsophisticated sense of every reader of it must at once perceive, that, at the least, it is silent in regard to infant baptism. And yet learned men, incredible as it may appear, adduce this commission as a prime proof that infant baptism is authorized in the New Testament !

That I may not by any inadvertence misrepresent Pedobaptist opinion on this point, I shall quote a passage from the author I referred to and quoted from in Part I.—Dr. White, of the New York Theological Seminary.

“ Let us examine a little the allegation that there is no command in the New Testament to baptize children the seed of believers. Is this certainly so ? What signifies the Saviour’s departing injunction, “ Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them ?” Of whom are all nations constituted ? Of men, or women, or children exclusively ? Or are they constituted of all of them together ? And by what right is any class of those who constitute the nations excepted ? When this command of the Saviour has been fully obeyed, and all the nations are baptized, will the children included in them be baptized, or will they not ?” Yes : but they will all *first* have been taught the gospel ; and what then becomes of infant baptism ?

Dr. White, in his haste to propound this series

of questions, which he seems to have regarded as conclusive argument, must not only have forgotten the very first and fundamental duty of the Commission, but must have forgotten to read it from his Greek Testament. His questions are clearly based upon the supposition that the pronoun *them* has for its antecedent *all nations*—"disciple *all nations*, baptizing *them*" (the nations). Had he taken the precaution to read the passage in the original, he would have seen that *them* (*αυτους*) being masculine, cannot agree with *all nations*, (*παντα τα εθνη*) which is neuter, but must agree with *μεμαθητευμενους*—*those who are discipled*, understood. The clear import of the expression in the original is, "Disciple all nations, baptizing the disciples;" and that I suppose every plain reader of the English Testament understands the import of our version of it to be. So it matters not whether unconscious infants are a part of all nations, or not; they are not commanded to be baptized unless they are FIRST DISCIPLED. The commission makes this as plain as language can make it.

Dr. White however admits in the next paragraph, that faith is required in an adult before he can be baptized, and also in a parent before he has a right to present his children for baptism. But I ask, what *intimation* is there in this commission about children? What *permission* even is there here, to baptize them, whether parents have faith or not? "DISCIPLE all nations, baptizing *those who are DISCIPLED*." "He that BELIEVETH and is baptized." Disciples—believers,

only, are named as subjects of baptism; not a word, or intimation is given respecting their seed. Was a greater outrage upon language ever committed than that of *putting* infants into this plain and positive law of the King of Zion? Does the reader inquire, by what logical process infants are put into a law which specifies only disciples or believers? for it must be supposed that the Professor of Systematic Theology in the Union Theological Seminary has some reason for such a position. I answer, the position is based on the assumption that the Commission is only an *appendage* of the covenant of circumcision, instead of being THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW of a new dispensation, opposed both in form and in spirit to that of which the covenant of circumcision formed an essential part. But how terrible a thing it is, however unconsciously, thus to tamper with the Word of God!

- It is frequently alleged that the Jews, before the Christian era, were accustomed to baptize proselytes and their children with them; and that the Apostles, familiar with this usage, would understand the Saviour's commission to direct the same thing. But I ask, what room is there for mere conjecture as to how the Apostles would understand this law? Have they not told us in their recorded practice how they understood it? Their practice, as I have shown, was solely believers' baptism; not a solitary instance of their baptizing infants is recorded. After they have themselves shown us how they understood it, has any body a right to conjecture how they *might*

have understood it? Besides it has been shown by Dr. Sears, Prof. Stuart, and many of the ablest foreign critics, that the Jews never practised proselyte baptism, until at least thirty or forty years after the date of this commission.

There is no ambiguity about this commission, and no room to doubt that by its very terms infants are excluded from baptism. *Disciples*, as expressed by one Evangelist, *believers*, as expressed by another, are the only subjects of baptism, as stated in the LAW OF CHRIST. The New Testament import of the terms *disciple* and *believer* is, among all evangelical Christians, settled. The word *disciple* does not imply less than one who is instructed, but *more*. A person, incapable of being instructed, cannot, in the nature of the case, be a disciple. Says Dr. Sears, (Chr. Rev. Vol. iii. p. 205,) "How does any one become a *disciple*, except by being *taught*? How does the Greek word, which signified *to teach*, come to signify *to make a disciple*, except by including the idea of *instruction*? Will it be pretended that the word is used, either in the New Testament, or in classic writers, *where the idea of instruction is not involved*? It cannot be applied to unconscious babes, who are incapable of receiving instruction." It is sometimes said, that the exigencies of this law are fulfilled in the baptism of the children of believers, because this act connects them with the church, and so bringing them under her hallowed influence puts them in a probable way of *becoming* disciples or believers. If the law read, "Put all nations in a probable way of becoming disciples,

baptizing them," this would fulfill its exigencies. The law is, "baptize *disciples—believers*," not those who, with whatever degree of probability, *may become disciples*.

So this point was understood in the early church, as is clear from the institution of the order of catechumens. This order, formed for the purposes of elementary Christian instruction, embraced all candidates for baptism, those born of Christian parents as well as heathens, and from the time of its complete institution, through the first four centuries, this was the only regular mode of approach to baptism.* When infant baptism became common, being a catechumen became a mere form. Still the fact that the shell was retained long after the practice of infant baptism had eaten out the substance of it,—infants being *called* catechumens for a certain period of time before baptism—is a proof that there was originally a substance to it; and that substance was the fact that Christ's law, requiring discipleship as an indispensable prerequisite to baptism, could not be fulfilled with anything less than a regular course of Christian instruction and discipline.

Furthermore, the formula of baptism is a proof that infant baptism is forbidden by this commission. "Baptizing them *into* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This must imply one of two things; either Christian baptism does actually produce a spiritual and vital

* See Christian Review, Vol. xiii. p. 214, et seq.

union with the sacred Three, or it is an outward expression and profession of such a union, which had a supposed previous existence, the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. If the first of these alternatives expresses the truth, that is, if the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is scriptural, infant baptism is still inconsistent with this commission, for the baptized must be *first taught*. But if that doctrine is unscriptural, and soul destructive, as all evangelical Christians hold, infant baptism is necessarily forbidden. For, how can an unconscious infant *profess* a spiritual union with God? Says Dr. Robinson, "*To be baptized εἰς INTO the name of any one, as Matt. xxviii. 19, imports a profession of faith in any one, and sincere obedience to him.*"*

Administering baptism to unconscious infants is a plain *subversion* of Christ's law of baptism. The law which commands baptism to be administered solely to believers, at the same time commands believers to be baptized. Clearly the command to be baptized is addressed to those, who, according to the law of baptism, are the proper subjects of the ordinance. Now, in a case of infant baptism, I ask, which of the three parties concerned, the administrator, the parent, or the subject, has obeyed the law of baptism? Not the administrator; for the law being as much a command to the subject of the ordinance to be baptized, as to the administrator to baptize him, cannot, without a plain contradiction, authorize

* Robinson's Lexicon, Voc. βαπτίζω.

him to baptize a person who is not capable of intelligently obeying a command. It cannot authorize him to baptize an unconscionable subject. Not the parent; for the relation of parent and child is not so much as hinted at in the law. Not the infant; for he is not a subject of any command. He is baptized without his knowledge. Such a baptism cannot, in any sense, be Christian baptism, for it is contrary to the law of Christian baptism. And it is a subversion of it. It is placing powerful obstacles—not indeed physical ones, but those which are far more potent—in the way of that child's ever obeying that law, if he shall by grace be inclined to. The doctrine of infant baptism, to which he is committed in the tender period of infancy by the rite itself, in which also he is trained, forbids his own voluntary submission to Christ's imperative law to believers, should he ever become a believer. *It is breaking Christ's commandment, and teaching men, in the most direct, systematic, and thorough manner, to do the same.* And who is responsible for all this?

It is a violation of religious liberty. It perpetuates under the Gospel a yoke of bondage, under the false idea of a Christian privilege. A child, before he can discern good from evil, or has any power of choice, is religiously bound to an ecclesiastical form, and forbidden ever after to exercise his inalienable right of conscientious opinion as to the form of religion. The doctrine of infant baptism forbids him, even if he choose and desire it, intelligently and voluntarily to obey Christ. He is trained up in the belief, that the

moment he obeys Christ, he becomes a covenant-breaker, and exposes himself to the consequences of so fearful a crime. It is in itself tyranny, and the main pillar of all ecclesiastical despotism. Never could an ecclesiastical state establishment subsist, were it not for infant baptism.*

* The proposition enunciated above deserves a volume devoted especially to its elucidation and confirmation. The past and the present abound with illustrations of it. One fact out of the thousand that might be mentioned I will here refer to, because it is of recent occurrence. Rev. F. O. Nelson, formerly a missionary of the American Seaman's Friend Society in Gottenburg, Sweden, and a Methodist minister, recently became a Baptist, and was "arraigned before the bar of a priestly court called Consistory, to answer to the crime of having dared to preach the Gospel of Christ, and administer his holy ordinances according to his appointment."

Rev. Dr. Dowling, communicating to the New York Recorder a letter detailing these facts, says: "It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that the special vengeance of the priests of the Lutheran establishment, seems to be reserved for those who deny their favorite dogma of infant sprinkling. For years past has brother Nelson preached without molestation the doctrines of the Methodist Church, which differ in many points from the Lutheran standards; but the instant that he attempts to restore the ancient and scriptural qualification for baptism,—'If thou believest with all thy heart,'—they resort to an equally ancient mode of opposition, and, unable to answer his arguments, cry out, 'Away with him! A pestilent fellow!' It would seem as though they felt that their craft was in danger, and if infant baptism should fall, their state religion and their state support must go with it."—*Christian Watchman and Reflector*, Sept. 13, 1849. ..

CHAPTER IV.

INCIDENTAL ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM IN THE
EPISTLES.

IF the question of the subjects of baptism is not clearly settled by the law of baptism, as contained in the New Testament, it must be an imperfect law. In the case of circumcision, and every other rite of the ancient dispensation, the law establishing the rite clearly defines its subjects. And, *à priori*, we should expect it would be so with the law of baptism.

The *enactment* of the law of Christian baptism, is contained in the last commission. The clear and obvious import of this, in its bearing upon infant baptism, has been shown.

Besides this enactment, there are two other sources of light in regard to the law of baptism. The first is the practice of the Apostles on that commission. This we have also considered. The second is the occasional and incidental references and allusions to baptism in the Apostolical Epistles. The light which these allusions throw upon the law of baptism is clear and irresistible. Although, if infant baptism were established by the commission, we could hardly suppose that in several historical relations of the apostolical administration of this ordinance, recorded as a guide to the church in all time, not a solitary instance should occur of its administration to

infants,—still it may be said that in each of these recorded instances some peculiar circumstances were combined which forbid our drawing a universal inference from them touching the law of baptism. But this cannot be said of the references to baptism in the Epistles. These references are founded upon the universal apostolical usage in that ordinance. The arguments based upon them by the Apostles in the connection in which they occur, have no force unless what is said of baptism is according to *the law itself of the ordinance*, and *the universal practice of the Church in the age of inspiration*.

Baptism is referred to in the following passages in the Epistles:—Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 13; xv. 29; Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 12; Heb. x. 22, 23; 1 Pet. iii. 21; each of which excludes the possibility that baptism was administered to infants in the Apostolical Church.

1. The passages in Romans and Galatians. “Know ye not that *so many of us* as were baptized *into* Jesus Christ, were baptized *into his death?*” “For *as many of you* as have been baptized *into* Christ, *have put on* Christ.” The language here corresponds with that of the Commission, “baptizing them *into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The whole argument of Paul in Rom. vi. hinges on this fact, that Christians, *in their baptism*, made a profession of the name of Christ, and of sincere obedience to him,—“baptized into Jesus Christ,”—that in being baptized they acknowledged his death, and their obligation to be con-

formed to the purposes to be accomplished by his death,—“baptized into his death.” The language implies a voluntary and intelligent profession. It could not, without gross absurdity, be applied to persons baptized in infancy. Of the same import is the passage in Galatians. In their baptism, they, voluntarily by profession, assumed the character of Christians. Had any proportion of those whom Paul addressed been baptized in infancy, the argument would have been without force. But none of them could have been baptized in infancy. The language is universal; it includes all who were baptized,—“*So many of us as were baptized,*”—“*So many of you as have been baptized.*” And if the Apostolic churches were all formed on the same model, so that the same general description would apply to them all, there could not have been any Christians in that age baptized in infancy. The necessary inference from these passages is, that infant baptism did not then exist; and if all churches were Apostolical now, infant baptism would not now exist.

2. The passage in 1 Cor. xii. 13. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” That the Apostle here speaks of outward baptism is clear from the fact that the “one body” is the visible church; and that the visible church is referred to by this phrase is evident from the whole connection. “Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets,” &c. And the affirmation of this text can imply nothing less than that all

the members of the church enter it by baptism, and that in this act they profess to be governed by the directions of the Holy Spirit in his word, and his influences in the heart. This manifestly involves an active and informed understanding, and the exercise of faith. And since infants are incapable of this, and since the Apostle speaks of this as a then universal fact in the church, the conclusion is irresistible that no unconscious infants were baptized in the Apostolic age.

3. The passage in 1 Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" The argument here appears to be founded on the fact that all who were baptized, professed, in that act, their faith in the resurrection of the dead, as recognizing the symbolical import of baptism, viz., the burial and resurrection of Christ. But this could not be said of the baptism of an unconscious infant, who could profess nothing, and recognise nothing.

4. The passages in Colossians and Hebrews speak of the spiritual purification, which is essential to salvation, as preceding in its order outward baptism. "In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands—buried with him in baptism." "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." But since an unconscious infant can give no evidence of having experienced that purification, they cannot be proper subjects of the outward ordinance.

5. The passage in 1 Pet. iii. 21, declares that

baptism is “the answer of a good conscience towards God;” which can imply nothing less than that in every case of the proper administration of baptism, the subject acts in accordance with the dictates of a good conscience. But what conscience can an unconscious infant have about his baptism?

RECAPITULATION.

I have now shown that the New Testament is not merely silent in relation to infant baptism,—it contains a prohibition of it. It does not, indeed, mention it in terms and forbid it, but its prohibition of it is not less clear and decisive. It prohibits it in the terms in which it forbids our subjection to all religious ordinances which are not commanded by God. It prohibits it in the law itself of baptism, which *requires* the baptism of believers only, and hence forbids the baptism of infants, who cannot be believers. It prohibits it in all the inspired accounts of Apostolic baptisms, which are solely the baptism of disciples. It prohibits it in all the Apostolical allusions to baptism, which are not only silent in relation to the baptism of infants, but the supposition of infant baptism involves an absurdity in those allusions; a perfect *non sequitur* in the arguments based upon them.

We are now prepared to inquire what light early ecclesiastical history sheds upon our subject.

CHAPTER V.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH ON INFANT BAPTISM. TESTIMONY OF MOSHEIM AND NEANDER.

As the History of the Church in the ages immediately succeeding the Apostles is strongly appealed to in support of Infant Baptism,* I propose to give that branch of the subject as full an examination as my limits will permit. I shall show that the History of the primitive Church, so far from sustaining this rite, furnishes indisputable evidence against it.

It is worthy of notice in the outset, that while many Pedobaptists affirm that infant baptism may be traced in the writings of the Fathers, up to the very time of the Apostles, they affirm it in opposition to the standard ecclesiastical historians, and

* To say nothing of inferior men, it is sufficient to show the weight attached to this argument by such a man as Dr. Chalmers, and we fear we must add, the little attention which he had given to the true state of the case. J. N. B.

“There is no satisfactory historical evidence of our practice having ever crept in—the innovation of a later period in the history of the church. Had the mode of infant baptism sprung up as a new piece of sectarianism, it would not have escaped the notice of the authorship of the times. But there is no credible written memorial of its ever having entered amongst us as a novelty, and we have therefore the strongest reason [to believe] that it has come down in one uncontrolled tide of example and observation from the days of the Apostles.”—*Lecture XIV. on Romans.*

the most able critical scholars of the age, Pedobaptists as well as Baptists. Mosheim does not find it so early as in the second century. In the account of Baptism in the first century, he says it "was administered in places prepared for that purpose, by immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font. It was at first customary that *the converts* should be baptized and received into the Church by those under whose ministry they *had embraced* the Christian doctrine. Afterwards the right of baptizing *Christian converts* was vested in the Bishop alone."*

Here we have Gospel baptism only—the immersion of Christian converts. In the second century he says: "The persons to be baptized, *after they had repeated the Creed, confessed and renounced their sins*, were immersed under water, &c."† We have nothing here of the baptism of unconscious infants.

The decided opinion of Neander, that infant baptism is not of Apostolical origin, I have already given in Chapter I. As to its origin, he expresses himself somewhat more definitely in his Church History,‡ in language which I will quote.

"Baptism was administered at first only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from Apostolical institution, and *the recognition of it* which followed somewhat later, *as an Apostolical*

* Cent. I. Pt. I. Chap. IV. Sec. 8.

† Cent. II. Pt. IV. Chap. IV. Sec. 13.

‡ Torrey's Neander, vol. I. p. 311.

tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis. . . Immediately after Irenæus, in the last years of the second century, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism; a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an Apostolical institution; for otherwise he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. But when, now, on the one hand, the doctrine of the corruption and guilt cleaving to human nature in consequence of the first transgression, was reduced to a more precise and systematic form; and on the other, from the want of duly distinguishing between what is outward and what is inward in baptism, (the baptism by water, and the baptism by the Spirit,) the error became more firmly established, that without external baptism no one could be delivered from that inherent guilt, could be saved from the everlasting punishment that threatened him, or raised to eternal life; and when the notion of a magical influence, a charm connected with the sacraments continually gained ground, the theory was finally evolved of the unconditional necessity of infant baptism. About the middle of the third century this theory was generally admitted in the North African Church. In the Alexandrian Church also, which, in respect to its whole theological and dogmatic direction of mind was so essentially distinguished from the Church of North Africa, we find prevailing, even at a somewhat earlier period, the doctrine of the necessity of infant baptism."

Dr. Neander (allowed to be the most critical

Ecclesiastical historian of the age, and a Pedobaptist,) thus establishes the important facts, *that infant baptism is not of Apostolical origin; that it had its origin in the period intervening between the last part of the second century and the middle of the third; and that the theory of its unconditional necessity was founded on the error that no one could be saved without baptism, and the notion of a magical influence connected with the Sacraments.*

CHAPTER VI.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. CLEMENT OF ROME, HERMAS, &C. TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

DR. WALL, in his History of Infant Baptism, quotes passages from Clement of Rome, and Hermas, but which it is now generally allowed have no reference to infant baptism.* Dr. Woods

* This is hardly saying enough. The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, the only *undisputed* extant monument of the uninspired Christian writers of the first century, is of itself sufficient to settle this historical question. Written A. D. 95, in the name of the Church of Rome, *i. e.*, from the *Metropolitan* Latin church to the *Metropolitan* Greek church; (we use the term *Metropolitan* without reference to its later usage); it has occasion twice to speak of the parental relations and duties in detail, yet contains not the slightest allusion to the existence of Infant Baptism. This goes far to prove that the thing was *then* absolutely unknown in the Christian churches of the East, or of the West.

The same significant silence pervades the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas; all those of Ignatius, and of Polycarp to the

quotes from no Father earlier than Justin Martyr, who lived in the first half of the second century.

Dr. Peters publishes the following extraordinary statement in his work on Baptism, p. 169.

Philippians, which belong to the beginning of the second century. This ominous silence on such a topic is anything but *consent*. The only baptism of which they do speak is the immersion of believers. Thus, Barnabas (x. 10) "Consider how he hath joined the Cross and the water together. For this he saith, Blessed are they who put their trust in the Cross, and descend into the water." Again, (x. 14) "We go down into the water full of sins and pollutions, but come up again bringing forth fruit, having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus by the Spirit."

There is one passage in Hermas, (Similitude IX.) which, although we do not remember to have seen it quoted in this controversy, (not even by Dr. Wall) seems indeed expressly *designed* to show that infants were not *then* baptized, nor regarded as fit materials for the Christian Church. The passage is long, and we can quote only what is directly to the point. "First of all, sir, said I, tell me what this rock and this gate denote? Hearken said he: this rock and this gate are the Son of God.—Then I said, what is this tower? This, said he, is the Church.—Thou seest *the whole tower of the same color with the rock*, and made as it were of one stone. So also *those who have believed in God by his Son* have put on his Spirit. Behold, there shall be one Spirit and one body.—Before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal he is freed from death, and assigned unto life. Now that seal is the water of baptism, *into which men go down* under the obligation unto death, but *come up* appointed unto life.—As for the rest (of the white stones) which continued still *round*, and were *not found fit* for the building of this tower, *because they have not yet received the seal*, they were carried back to their place, because they were found very round. *But this present world must be cut away from them, and then they will be fit for the kingdom of God.* For they must enter into the kingdom of God, because God has blessed this *innocent* kind.—I, the Angel of Repentance, esteem you happy, whosoever are *innocent as little children.*"

J. N. B.

“Justin Martyr also, who lived in the first half century after the Apostle John, says that ‘infants are washed with water in the name of the Father, and Son, and Spirit!’” What *inventor* of history has *victimised* the venerable author of “Sprinkling the only mode of Baptism made known in the Scriptures,” we are at a loss to conjecture. We may, however, safely conclude that what Neander, Wall, Woods, Sears, and Emerson, with every motive to find all that Justin said in favor of infant baptism, and every facility for successful investigation, *did not find*, has no existence in Justin’s writings.*

The following passage is frequently quoted from the first Apology of Justin, as a proof of the early existence of infant baptism. “Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were disciplined to Christ from their childhood, (ἐκ παίδων ἐμαθητεύθησαν) do continue uncorrupted.”† However it might harmonize with the views of a high Churchman like Dr. Wall, to defend infant baptism by this passage, it is a wonder that a Pedobaptist of the Genevan school, like Dr. Woods, should quote it. Will Evangelical Protestants claim that baptism disciplines any one to Christ? And if infants may be disciplined to Christ by baptism, why not adults? To do justice however to Dr. Woods, it should be stated that in his second edition, with his usual candor and good sense, after quoting the passage,

* See Appendix.

† Wall, Part I. Chap. II. Sec. 6.

he adds: "Yet as the phrase *ἐκ παιδῶν*, may relate to children who have come to years of understanding, as well as to infants, I am satisfied, on a review of the testimony of Justin, that *it cannot well be urged as conclusive in favor of infant baptism.*"* The passage will apply in all its force to Baptist churches at this day, and comes much nearer proving that these churches correspond generally in doctrine and practice with the churches of Justin's day, than that infant baptism is Apostolic. Indeed, baptism is not so much as mentioned in the passage.

But there is a passage in Justin in which baptism is mentioned, in which he minutely describes *who* were baptized in his day, and also shows *how* they were baptized. "It is," says Dr. Wall, "the most ancient [formal] account of the way of baptizing, next the Scriptures, and shows the plain and simple manner of administering it." "*Here we have,*" says Dr. Sears, "*from the earliest (considerable) Christian Father, a positive testimony against infant baptism,—an assertion, that the baptism which had been handed down from the Apostles, was an ordinance in which one was to exercise choice and knowledge.*"† "A single distinct whisper," says Prof. Emerson, of Andover, "from the lips of a Justin Martyr, is of more avail in this argument than the loudest words from the mouth of an Augustine."‡

The passage is contained in Justin's First

* Lect. on Inf. Bap. p. 112, 2d ed.

† Chr. Rev. vol. iii. p. 205.

‡ Chr. Rev. vol. vi. p. 303.

(commonly called Second) Apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. The original may be found in Wall's Hist. of Infant Baptism, Part I. Chap. 2, Sect. 3. The translation here given is his, collated with the original, and several other translations.

“I will now relate the manner in which we, having been renewed by Christ, dedicate ourselves to God, lest, if I omit this, I shall seem to deal in some respect perversely in this account.

“As many as are persuaded and believe that the things taught by us are true, and promise to live according to them, are directed first to pray, and ask of God, with fasting, the forgiveness of their former sins; we praying and fasting together with them. Afterwards they are conducted by us *to some place where there is water*, and after the same way of regeneration, whereby we were ourselves regenerated, they are regenerated. For they are *then* washed in water, (lit. *they then perform the bath or bathing in water—ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται*,) in the name of the Lord God and Father of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.

“And now, in reference to this thing, (viz., baptism, including all the transactions described,) we have learned from the Apostles this reason: because we, being ignorant of our first birth, were generated by necessity, and have been brought up in ill customs and conversation, that we should no longer remain children of *necessity* and *ignorance*, but of *choice* and *knowledge*, and that we might obtain by water (lit. *in the water—*

ἐν τῷ ὕδατι) remission of the sins in which we had before transgressed, ἁμαρτιῶν ὑπὲρ ὧν προημάετομεν,) the name of the Lord God and Father of all is pronounced over him who chooses to be regenerated, and repents of his sins. And this washing (bathing—λουτρεῖν) is called *illumination*, as they, learning these things, are *illuminated in mind.*”

In how many different ways this passage refutes the baptism of infants, so far as the practice of the early church bears upon it! Justin is giving the Emperor a full statement of the administration of baptism in the entire Christian body. All the candidates for baptism *believe, engage to live according to the Christian precepts, seek with fasting the forgiveness of their sins, and are then* baptized. In baptism they are not children of necessity and ignorance, but of *choice and knowledge*. He who is baptized *chooses to be*. Did ever any one, ancient or modern, pretend that unconscious infants are, in baptism, children of *choice and knowledge*?—that they *choose to be* baptized? Compare the language of Justin with the following from Augustine, written some two centuries and a half later, when infant baptism was well established. “Children, who can neither will, nor refuse either good or evil, are nevertheless *compelled to be* holy and righteous, when, *struggling and crying with tears against it*, they are regenerated by holy baptism. For doubtless, dying before the use of reason, they will be holy and righteous in the kingdom of God, through grace, to which they come, not by their own

ability, but by *necessity*.”* This language is perfectly consistent with infant baptism; that of Justin is as decidedly opposed to it.

Again, Justin calls baptism, *illumination*, because, in the instruction which preceded and attended it, the mind is *illuminated*. For a similar reason he calls baptism *regeneration*; because, being administered only to those who were instructed, and believed that the *things they were* taught were true; who were penitent, sought by fasting and prayer the forgiveness of their sins, and engaged to live a new life, it became the *visible consummation of an entire change* in the heart and life. Both these terms, *illumination* and *regeneration*, applied in Justin’s time to baptism, and for the reasons which he gives—the instructions and exercises which preceded baptism—are a strong argument against infant baptism; for they imply an active and informed understanding, and a work upon the heart, the evidence and fruits of which can be seen and appreciated. And when baptism was afterwards administered to infants, while still it was called by these names, we see most clearly the notion of the *magical effect*—the *charm* in the outward rite, of which Neander speaks; a notion which, however it may correspond with the views and practices of a later age, cannot have gained a footing in the Church so early as in the first century after the Apostles.

On the whole, it is impossible to conceive of a

* Emerson’s Wiggers’ Augustinism and Pelagianism, p. 72.

more perfect refutation of infant baptism than this passage affords. In no other form could it be so perfect and conclusive. Had Justin said, in express terms, "Baptism is to be administered only to adults—infants may not be baptized," while his testimony against it would have been explicit, it would also have proved that there were some in that day who thought that infants ought to be baptized; and hence, that the rite then had existence. But by simply describing baptism, and the principles on which it was administered, in such a way as totally to exclude the conception of infant baptism, it is a demonstration that it neither existed, nor was so much as thought of, at that time. It is precisely such a testimony as Dr. Wall declares "would be," if it could be found, "more material and decisive evidence than any that has yet been produced from antiquity on either side." And this is the nature of the testimony against infant baptism, both in the New Testament, and the earliest Christian writers. It is not a contradiction of it in express terms; this would prove its actual existence. Nobody would take pains to controvert a nonentity. But it is a most perfect negation of it; the most decisive refutation possible.

CHAPTER VII.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—SUPPOSED TESTIMONY OF IRENÆUS IN FAVOR OF INFANT BAPTISM.

IRENÆUS, Bishop of Lyons, flourished in the latter part of the second century, a little after Justin Martyr. Dr. Wall assigns for him the date A. D. 167; some other writers place him at A. D. 178. His public life, doubtless, began as early as the first of these dates, and continued later than the last.

From the writings of this Father, a passage is quoted by Pedobaptist authors, which, it is claimed, expressly refers to infant baptism, and justifies it as an apostolic practice; since it is a well established fact that Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp of the Apostle John.

Two very able and thorough criticisms upon this celebrated passage have been published within a recent date, in which the view of it which I shall briefly present, is sustained beyond all possibility of cavil, by numerous quotations from Irenæus; the one in the *Christian Review* for June, 1838, by Rev. Dr. Sears, of Newton, and the other in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Andover) for Nov. 1849, by Rev. Irah Chase, D. D., of Boston.

Dr. Chase, in his introductory remarks, observes: "Several years ago my attention was

called to the passage embracing the memorable phrase, *renascuntur in Deum*, in the work of Irenæus against Heresies; and the following article presents the results of an examination instituted for the purpose of ascertaining the sense in which he there uses that phrase. I was not satisfied with any explanation of it which I had seen; and I resolved to let the author himself furnish an explanation. I examined every page of his work, and was led to a conclusion which, to me, was quite unexpected. I re-examined the whole, and was again conducted to the same conclusion. Since that time, I have, here and there, met with some brief statements, indicating that others have been led to a similar result. (Baumgarten-Crusius, Krabbe, and Bötringen are mentioned, with references.)

“Most of those who have written with commendable erudition respecting Irenæus, have been occupied with discussions which have led them away from examining the particular point which I have endeavoured to elucidate. That the impartial and venerable Neander should seem to have acquiesced in an interpretation which I suppose to be erroneous, may easily have arisen from the intensity with which, while he was reading Irenæus, his mind was attracted to other matters than the one here discussed. Were he to read him with a special view to this, he would, I am confident, come to the result set forth in the subsequent pages.”

Dr. Chase's view of the passage in question, is

contained in the following extract, which includes a translation of the passage itself.

“According to Irenæus, Christ, in becoming incarnate, and thus assuming his mediatorial work, brought the human family into a new relation under himself, and placed them in a condition in which they can be saved. In this sense, he is the Saviour of all. He restored them, or summed them up anew, in himself. He became, so to speak, a second Adam, the regenerator of mankind. Through him they are regenerated unto God: *per eum renascuntur in Deum*.

“The thought occurs frequently, and it is variously modified by the various connections in which it is introduced.

“In the passage which has often been brought forward as recognizing the baptism of infants, Irenæus is maintaining that Christ appeared as he really was, and passed through the various stages of human life, ‘sanctifying,’ it is added, ‘every age by the likeness it had to himself; *omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam,—qui per eum renascuntur in Deum—* for he came to save all by himself;—all, I say, since by him they are regenerated unto God,—infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons.* Therefore he came through

* In connection with the translation given above, the following note occurs: “*Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam,—qui per eum renascuntur in Deum,* etc. That *omnes* is repeated for the purpose of giving it, not restriction, but emphasis, is manifest from the amplification which is extended throughout the paragraph. The proposition that Christ came to save all by himself, seems

the several ages, and for infants was made an infant, sanctifying infants; among little ones, a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and, at the same time, being to them an example of piety, uprightness, and obedience; among the youths, a youth, becoming an example to the youths, and sanctifying them to the Lord; thus, also, an elderly person, among elderly persons, that he might be a perfect master among all, not only in respect to the presentation of truth, but also in respect to age, sanctifying at the same time the elderly persons, and becoming to them an example. Thus, too, he passed through even unto death, that he might be the first-born from the dead, himself holding the primacy in all things, the Prince of Life, superior to all, and preceding all.'

“What Irenæus thought of baptism, must be

to be based on the assumed fact that by him all are regenerated unto God. That whatever is meant here by regenerated, it was, in such a connection as this, conceived of as belonging to all, appears also from other passages, in which the same thing, or its equivalent, is most clearly attributed to ‘all,’ to ‘man,’ or to ‘men,’ without any limitation; in short, to mankind, the whole human family, ‘*genus humanum.*’ The critical reader will perceive that, in accordance with this view, *qui*, in the connection above, is regarded as being used instead of a causative conjunction, and is freely translated *since they*. The relative *qui*, it is well known, is sometimes used in this manner.”

[We must dissent from our venerable brother in this single point of his translation. Even if sufficiently sustained by analogous usage, (which we somewhat doubt,) we must object to a departure from the ordinary sense of “*qui*,” in this instance, as uncalled for and injurious. We greatly prefer the common translation, “all I say, *who* by him are regenerated unto God.”—J. N. B.]

gathered from the passages in which he is speaking of the subject. But that he is speaking of it in this passage, there is no sufficient evidence. For a mere resemblance in one or two words to certain terms sometimes used in connection with baptism, falls very far short of proving the point assumed. The context is against it; for the context directs our attention to *Christ*, and what he himself, personally, came to do for the human family. It is by *him*, and not by baptism, that they are here said to be renewed, born anew, or regenerated. And parallel passages are against it; for they abundantly confirm the sense which I have given, as being the true sense of the passage before us.” Here follow several pages of quotations from the work of Irenæus, from which the passage is taken.

To the same purpose are the remarks of Dr. Sears, in the article before mentioned, Chr. Rev. vol. 3, p. 206, et seq. He observes: “Every thing here turns on the meaning of the word *renascuntur*. If it means, *they were regenerated*, then it has nothing to do with our subject; if it means, *they were baptized*, then it proves the existence of infant baptism in the time of Irenæus. This question cannot be settled, as many have thought, by an appeal to *later* writers; for the idea of baptismal regeneration was of gradual growth, and in every successive period, from the Apostles to the middle ages, words were changed in their meaning to correspond with the change of ideas. In tracing the history of the word, it would be necessary to begin with the words of

Christ, 'except a man be born of water,' and of Paul, 'the washing of regeneration,' and ascertain how they were used by the *earliest* writers, and thus trace out the growing connection between baptism and regeneration, till they became identical. Justin Martyr, the earliest writer, regarded the whole change produced by Christianity, both internal and external, as regeneration. Entering the church by baptism was a part, as an outward change; including, however, a *previous* spiritual or moral change by repentance and faith. In other words, the change contemplated by the Gospel was not, in his view, completed, till by baptism it was expressly declared. He did not suppose that the ceremony of baptism *produced* penitence and faith; far from it. He says, 'it can cleanse those only who *have* repented.' Again, 'the name of the Trinity is pronounced over him who *has desired* regeneration, and has repented of his sins.' (So several other phrases in the passage which has been quoted at length from Justin, which see.) All these passages show, that, with Justin Martyr, baptism, as the *outward act* of regeneration, is *preceded* by a moral change.

"Irenæus generally employs the word *regeneration*, and others of the same import, to designate *the general work of Christ in redeeming the human race*. If we let him interpret himself, we shall find that all the senses in which he uses the word, grow out of this radical signification." He then quotes several passages from this work of Irenæus, in which the terms *regenerate* and *sanc-*

tify are used in precisely in this sense, and with reference to the whole human race—passages precisely parallel to the one in question, but which cannot have the remotest reference to baptism. Thus Christ, being born of Mary, who was descended from Eve, Irenæus says, “received into his own bosom the primitive Fathers, and *regenerated them into the life of God—regenerated them into the gospel of life.*” Again, “*he passed through every period of human life, restoring to all communion with God.*” “After his birth, he was carried into Egypt, to sanctify those who were infants there.” “The Word was made flesh, the Son of God became the Son of Man, purifying the Virgin, who (through her offspring) *regenerated men unto God.*”

Dr. S., in the progress of his investigation, proceeds to show, that “when the word is used in a less general sense, and regeneration is represented, not merely as a provision made by Christ for all men, but a provision that is *accepted*, some term is added which expresses *reception*—as *faith*, and others of like import.” For example: “How can we leave the generation of death, (our depraved state,) except by entering into the *new generation*, mysteriously and unexpectedly given us of God for a sign of salvation, (Isa. vii. 14,) that is, *regeneration*, which is from the Virgin, (her offspring,) *through faith.*”

“In most of the particular cases, (continues Dr. S.,) where Irenæus applies the term regeneration to individuals, they are those who believed, but were not baptized. The ‘*regeneration of the*

patriarchs,' Abraham and others, was a regeneration by faith, not by baptism. So in innumerable instances, he speaks of faith and salvation as being effected by the Spirit, and not by any outward ceremony. Again: 'giving to his disciples authority to *regenerate unto God*, he said, Go teach all nations.' It will not be pretended that Irenæus conceived the whole of this commission to be comprised in baptism. Regeneration here must mean the great change produced by the Gospel, and may, indeed, include baptism as a part of the Gospel, but cannot be limited to it.

“Although the word regeneration itself, in no passage in Irenæus, stands for the word baptism, it is two or three times used in connection with baptism. We once find 'baptism of regeneration,' and once, 'the bath of regeneration.' So the phrase which he frequently uses, 'the baptism of repentance,' and another, 'the baptism of truth,' neither of them mean that baptism is identical with repentance, or truth, but merely that they are connected—that the former is a symbol, or a part of the latter. A passage, that the blind man 'needed the bath of regeneration, and that Christ, after he had put clay upon his eyes, bid him go and wash in the pool of Siloam, at the same time restoring to him his formation, and that regeneration which is by the bath,' as it does not refer to an actual baptism, but is merely a mystical comparison, according to the spirit of that age, cannot prove much, except that Irenæus was sometimes a mystical interpreter. Comparing this with another passage, it would seem that

he supposed the water to have a certain mystical power on the *body*—not on the *mind*—imparting to it the seeds of immortality, and thus standing connected with its resurrection to incorruptibility.

“Both Justin Martyr and Irenæus appear to have attached to baptism, besides its symbolical meaning, an obscure notion of its spiritual or mystical efficacy. In this, we learn from their allusions to Scripture, they were influenced by those two passages: ‘Except a man be born of water,’ &c., and ‘the washing of regeneration.’ Still they, neither of them, ever advance the later idea of a regeneration by baptism, where there had been, or could be, no antecedent repentance and faith. We may regard them, therefore, as occupying a middle ground in this respect, between the Apostles and the later Fathers.”

Dr. Sears sums up the matter in relation to the passage in question, thus:

“1. The phrase, ‘regenerated through Christ unto God,’ if it mean the general recovery of man through Christ’s incarnation and redemption, has numerous parallels in the writings of Irenæus; if it mean, ‘baptized through Christ unto God,’ it has no parallel—*absolutely none*.

“2. The phrase, ‘baptism through Christ unto God,’ is an incongruous idea, no where to be found in the Scriptures, in the writings of Irenæus, or in any other writer, ancient or modern.

“3. ‘Regeneration,’ standing alone, without any such words as ‘baptism’ and ‘bath’ prefixed,

and governing it in the genitive, never means baptism, in Irenæus.

“4. That Christ sanctified infants, by becoming an infant himself, has several parallels in Irenæus. ‘He became an infant, to aid our weak apprehension;’—‘he became an infant with us on this account.’ ‘He went into Egypt, sanctifying the infants that were there.’ It would be absurd to suppose that the infant Jesus baptized the Egyptian infants.

“5. That by passing through the several stages of human life, from infancy to old age, Christ sanctified human nature in these various stages, is an idea often-repeated by Irenæus, and by some modern writers too. But if the passage in question be limited to baptism, or to the baptized, it will contradict what he elsewhere says.

“6. The general character of Christ’s redemption or regeneration, as expressed in this passage, according to our interpretation, is a favourite idea with our author; a similar sentiment in regard to baptism, is not to be found in his writings.

“7. The connection of the latter part of the passage in question with the former, as explaining or amplifying the idea, is weakened, if not destroyed, by the other interpretation.”

I have thus given a sketch of the results of these two independent examinations of this celebrated passage; and they are worth, to the general reader, all the space they occupy in this work. They place this matter, so far as Irenæus is concerned, beyond all dispute or cavil. Still the reflection must have occurred to all who have

paid much attention to this historical question, as well as to the present writer, how incredible, if we had not the clearest evidence of the fact, that any man, who had even no other means of investigation than the naked passage itself in Dr. Wall's translation, (the one usually quoted,) could imagine that it contains any reference to baptism! Are men in their sober senses expected to believe that Irenæus, or any other *sane* writer, would represent Christ as himself administering the outward rite of baptism to all who are saved? But this is what he affirms, if "regenerate" in this passage means "baptize," as appears on the very face of even Dr. Wall's version of it: "For he came to save all persons *by himself*; all I mean, who *by him* are regenerated (or baptized) unto God." How obvious, too, is the consideration that "regenerate" in this passage, is used synonymously with "save" and "sanctify." This every one must see by a bare reading of the naked passage. Does any evangelical Christian wish to believe that baptism was used synonymously with sanctification and salvation, by the Christian writers of this early period? Can such an one wish to ascribe such errors to the disciple of him who was the disciple of the Apostle John? —the beloved disciple's spiritual grandson? Admitting that "regenerated" here means "baptized," what an appalling array must also be admitted! The supposition ascribes to Irenæus some of the most fatal errors of Popery, fully ripe.

Why should any one wish to understand Ire-

næus in this passage, differently from what he himself, in the passage itself, apart from numerous others of the same import, directs us to understand him? He tells us *how* Christ saved and regenerated *all*, in all these different ages. He did it—not by baptism—but by passing through, in his life, all these ages respectively, thus sanctifying each period of human life, setting a holy example in each, and rendering salvation possible to all persons in each of these periods. How beautiful the idea! One cannot choose but to love to dwell upon it; and the longer one dwells upon it, the more beautiful, the more rich and evangelical it seems! But once foisted in baptism here, and all its beauty vanishes, and you have in its stead the jargon of the accursed sorceress of Rome!

CHAPTER VIII.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. TESTIMONY OF
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

CLEMENT, of Alexandria in Egypt, or, as he is frequently written, Clemens Alexandrinus, flourished in the latter part of the second and beginning of the third century, and was consequently somewhat later than Irenæus, and may be regarded as next in succession to him. Rev. Dr. Sears published in the *Christian Review*, Vol. vi. p. 311, a passage which was probably never

before referred to in this controversy, and which sheds a strong additional light upon the historical question. It is a decisive testimony against the apostolical origin of infant baptism, furnishing convincing proof that that rite was unknown in the Church as late as Clement's time. I shall quote some sketch of it, chiefly in Dr. Sears' own words, premising that the original of what is translated from Clement may be found in the Review, as above.

“In his (Clement's) work entitled *Pædagogus*—in which Christ is regarded as the *overseer of children*—he maintains that all Christians are the *children* of the overseer. ‘We are the children,* but the Scriptures mention us by different names.’ After devoting a chapter to scripture passages and discussions about the word children, he meets the objection that Christians have the weakness and ignorance of children, and brings forward their baptism as a proof to the contrary. The chapter has the following title: ‘To such as imagine that the name children and infants implies the simplest rudiments of knowledge.’ He then proceeds:—

* This is perhaps a sufficient explanation of a passage, quoted from this work of Clement's, by Dr. Wall, as an argument in favor of infant baptism: “If any one be a fisherman, let him remember an Apostle, and the *children taken out of the water* ;”—*ἐξ ὕδατος ἀνασπόμενων παιδίων*. That the passage refers to baptism, Dr. Wall gives some reason to believe; but who the *children* are, is shown above. The passage affords a presumption in favor of *immersion*, and against infant baptism. They were taken *out of* the water; and when taken out, they were *children*, *i. e.* Christians. If Christians immediately after baptism, according to our conceptions of religion, they must have been before. See Wall's Hist. Vol. i. Chap. iii. § 9. Also, Torrey's Neander, Vol. i. p. 312.

‘We are not called children and infants, in respect to childishness and simplicity of knowledge, as the inflated Gnostics falsely say, for when we were regenerated, (made spiritual children by baptism,) we immediately obtained the complete *knowledge* for which *we were striving*. For we were enlightened, (another word for baptism, including also *its own proper meaning*,) that is, were made to know God. He, therefore, who is initiated into this perfect knowledge, is not imperfect (rude in knowledge). Christ was perfected by his baptism—(*i. e.* it was needful for him to be baptized, in order to his complete fitness for his office). Now the same thing takes place in regard to us. In being baptized we are enlightened; in being enlightened we are made children (of God); in being made children we are made perfect. This transaction is also called *grace, illumination, perfection, and bathing*. We call it *bathing*, because by it our sins are washed away; *grace*, because by it *the guilt of our transgressions* is remitted; *illumination*, because by means of it we behold that holy saving light, that is, we receive a clear insight into divine things; and *perfection*, because nothing is wanting. For what can yet be wanting to him who has a knowledge of God? He who is regenerated (baptized) or enlightened—as the term by which we designate the act signifies—is instantly delivered from darkness, and from that moment has received the light. Those bonds of ignorance are quickly severed by *human faith* and by divine grace. This same grace of illumination is the *changing*

of the character (or life,) so that it be not the same as before baptism. For religious knowledge rises with the illumination, pouring its radiance upon the mind, and we, who were unlearned, are immediately called disciples; (those who have been instructed—opposed to unlearned). It is a question whether this spiritual light arises when instruction is imparted; for you cannot ascertain precisely the time; because both *religious instruction leads to faith, and faith is taught by the Holy Spirit, in connection with baptism.*' ”

To these extracts quoted by Dr. Sears, I add the following, quoted by Dr. Chase in the article before mentioned.

“ Knowledge, therefore, is illumination, which removes ignorance, and gives perspicacity. Now the rejection of the bad is the bringing of the good to light; for what ignorance has sadly bound, is happily loosed by knowledge. And these bands are quickly dissolved, *by faith indeed on the part of man, but by grace on the part of God*; our sins being removed by one healing remedy, BAPTISM, RECEIVED IN THE DUE EXERCISE OF THE MIND.”

Dr. Sears continues: “ Now we ask, would it be possible for a believer in infant baptism, immediately after devoting a whole chapter in the manner above described to a discussion of the word *children*, to describe Christian baptism as fully as Clement does here, without the slightest allusion to the baptism of children? The scope of the whole passage is to show that nothing was done *ignorantly* by Christians, but that every

thing, pertaining to their religion, was performed in the clear light of intelligence. Every baptized person was *τέλειος*, fully initiated in spiritual knowledge, actually enlightened. The soundness of his argument depended on the universality of this fact. If a large number, all the children of believers, were exceptions, then they, in their baptism, would be a standing refutation of Clement's doctrine; and in the case of the universal prevalence of infant baptism, his whole argument, about an initiation which was attended with immediate illumination, would fail. And yet, how often does he reiterate this view! The argument from Christ's baptism depends solely on this principle. From the moment of his baptism, he stood forth complete; the Spirit had descended upon him. 'The very same thing happens to us.' Now if any Christians—for he is speaking of all who were spiritual children—were baptized when unconscious babes, without having a perfect spiritual knowledge, a real knowledge of God, his declaration would not be true. The Gnostics would bring up the whole practice of infant baptism, and confront him with these undeniable facts.

“Should any one suppose that Clement did actually maintain the absurd position, that unconscious infants were the subjects of all the mental exercises which he described, the clearest evidence of the contrary is found in the fact, that even in the age of Augustine, when the absurdities of the effects of baptism were carried to their highest pitch, and were *in truth* applied to infants, *such*

effects upon the infant mind were not pretended. Nothing can be clearer than the remark of Henke, viz. 'When baptism was called an *illumination*, new-born infants could not well have been the subjects of it.' We are not now concerned with the truth of Clement's sentiments in regard to baptism, but purely with the question whether they are reconcilable with infant baptism; and we think it pretty evident they are not."

Besides the expressions quoted from Clement, which Dr. Sears has insisted upon as inconsistent with infant baptism, the careful reader of the passage must have noticed several others equally conclusive; as, "when we were baptized, we obtained the complete knowledge *for which we were striving;*" literally, *contending with great earnestness*—which indicates strong religious exercises previous to baptism. "We call it grace, because by it the *guilt of our transgressions is remitted.*" This implies previous conviction of sin—of actual transgression. Again, "These bonds of ignorance are severed by *human faith* and divine grace." Again, "It is a question whether this spiritual light arises when *instruction is imparted;* because *religious instruction leads to faith, and faith is taught by the Holy Spirit.*" Here religious instruction previous to baptism is expressed, and the consciousness of the operation of the Spirit upon the heart, with the exercise of faith. All this is utterly inconsistent with the unconsciousness of infancy. And finally, "BAPTISM RECEIVED IN THE DUE EXERCISE OF THE MIND." Nothing can be more conclusive than this.

While Clement seems to have ascribed more to baptism than Justin Martyr, or Irenæus, (and he certainly ascribed much more to it than the Scriptures warrant,) there seems no good reason to suppose that he applied the terms "regeneration" and "illumination" to baptism, in any sense different from what Justin Martyr did. He, as we have seen, regarded baptism as the consummation of regeneration, and he expressly says that baptism is called illumination, because they who receive it are illuminated, or enlightened in mind.

The reader is desired here, to notice particularly the result of this historical examination so far. We are now at the commencement of the third century; at least one hundred years after the Apostolic age. From all the Christian writings extant, of this one hundred years after the Apostles, Pedobaptist writers quote only two passages, as containing any reference or allusion to infant baptism. True, Dr. Wall quotes several others; but his misapplication of them is so manifest that no writer at this day troubles himself either to quote or refute them. The first of these two usually quoted, is the one from Justin Martyr, which was considered in its proper place—"Some among us sixty or seventy years old, who were disciples to Christ from their childhood"—which Dr. Woods gives up, from the obvious consideration that the word translated "childhood" is not the Greek word usually employed to express infancy, and denotes persons of such an age that they could make an intelligent profession of faith. But besides the evidence arising from the passage

itself, that Justin is affirming nothing of unconscious infants, we have the additional testimony of the other passage from Justin, in which he minutely and carefully describes baptism, both as to the manner of its administration, and the persons to whom it was administered—and describes it in a way which totally excludes the possibility that infant baptism existed in the Church in his day.

Then the other passage relied on by Pedobaptists—the one from Irenæus—we have also fully examined, and found it totally silent in regard to baptism. But in addition to this demonstrated silence of the passage in Irenæus, we have seen from the passage in Clement, of Alexandria—a later writer than Irenæus,—that infant baptism had no existence in the Church in his day; which is a further demonstration that Irenæus made no allusion to infant baptism. We have then the historical fact demonstrated, *that infant baptism originated in the Church, later than the beginning of the third century of the Christian era—that is, later than one hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, the last survivor of the Apostles.*

And that it arose soon after this time, there is no cause for wonder. Let the scriptural truth of the native depravity of man be admitted; and let the notion also be firmly rooted that baptism can wash away both original and actual sin, and that without baptism no sin can be remitted; join with this the notion of inherent mystical sacramental potency in the act itself of baptism—and just as surely as effect must follow sufficient cause,

the baptism of new born infants must follow. That this was the state of theological opinion in the North African Church, in the early part of the third century, Neander clearly shows; and here, in the first half of this century, and on these principles, infant baptism arose. But we will not anticipate our history.

CHAPTER IX.

ORIGIN OF INFANT BAPTISM.—TERTULLIAN, OF
CARTHAGE, REMONSTRATES AGAINST IT.

THE period of Tertullian is given by Dr. Wall at A. D. 200. He was, therefore, nearly contemporary with Clement of Alexandria, though his life carries us somewhat later in history. From this point there is sufficient evidence of the existence of infant baptism. So far then as this is concerned, there is no need of further examination. But it is of some importance to ascertain precisely what the later testimonies do prove in relation to it.

Critics in ecclesiastical antiquities are generally agreed, that infant baptism is referred to, in terms of direct remonstrance, in a passage quoted from the writings of Tertullian. The question of chief importance here is, whether Tertullian opposes infant baptism as an *innovation*, or whether he himself is the *innovator*, propounding novel opinions on this subject, in opposition to the well-

established practice of the church. Dr. Woods maintains the latter position, and claims that his opposition to infant baptism arose from the fact, that he was a *Montanist*.* If that were the ground of his opposition, it could only be, because there was a difference of opinion between the Montanists and the great body of the Church on the subject of baptism. But from the account which Neander gives of the Montanists, and of Tertullian's connection with them, it does not appear that there was any such difference. The Montanists agreed generally with the Church at large, both in doctrine and practice. They held, as the point of difference, that the period of inspiration did not cease with the Apostolic age, but prophets and prophetesses were to be expected in all ages, through whose instrumentality the Church was to be perfected; and they claimed that Montanus and others among them, male and female, had such gifts of inspiration. From a very full and minute account of this subject, given by Neander, it is plain that Dr. Woods' conclusion, that Montanism was the ground of Tertullian's opposition to infant baptism, is wide from the truth.

Dr. Sears makes the following statement in

* This opinion of Dr. Woods is not authorized by Dr. Wall. It is also expressly contradicted by both the Editors of the two editions of this Father, which we have consulted — (*Rigaltius* 1675, used by Dr. Wall,) and the new and beautiful one of the Abbé Migne, (Paris, 1834.) The first Editor is a Protestant, the last a Roman Catholic. But they agree in saying that Tertullian was not *then* a Montanist.

regard to Tertullian's views of baptism.* "He combatted infant baptism, on account of its violating the fundamental principle that faith must precede baptism. His leading doctrine is stated thus: 'Baptism is the seal of faith. We are not baptized *in order* to cease from sin, but because our hearts are *already cleansed!*' In the well-known passage, *De baptismo* 18, he says: 'Baptism is not to be given rashly,' because pearls are not to be cast before swine. 'In every request for baptism, both parties are liable to be deceived. Therefore, according to each one's condition and character, it is better to delay baptism, especially with little children'—(*præcipue circa parvulos.*) This 'delay' was to be 'till they were grown up'—till 'they were able to know Christ.' His opponents confronted him with the passage, 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' &c. His judicious reply was, 'Let them come when they are grown up—let them come when they understand, and are taught whither they come;—let them become Christians when they are capable of knowing Christ.' He undoubtedly carried his caution too far in regard to virgins and widows; still the principle was a sound one which required good evidence of piety before baptism."

To the same purpose are the words of Neander; and I quote him with the more confidence, because he has evidently studied Tertullian with care. His account of him in his Church History is very full; and besides what he has there writ-

* Chr. Rev. Vol. iii. p. 214.

ten of him, he has published a separate work on Tertullian's life and writings. There seems to be good reason to rely with implicit confidence on his conclusions. He says :*

“But immediately after Irenæus, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism ; a proof that the practice had not as yet come to be regarded as an Apostolical institution ; for otherwise he would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it.” After quoting the language of Tertullian as given above, he adds : “Tertullian evidently means, that children should be led to Christ, by instructing them in Christianity ; but that they should not receive baptism, until, after having been sufficiently instructed, they are led from personal conviction, and by their own free choice, to seek for it with sincere longings of heart. It may be said, indeed, that he is only speaking of the course to be followed according to the general rule ; whenever there was momentary danger of death, baptism might be administered, even according to his views, (which was Dr. Wall's opinion of Tertullian's views). But if he had considered this to be so necessary, *he could not have failed to mention it expressly.* It seems in fact, according to the principles laid down by him, that he could not conceive of *any efficacy whatever* residing in baptism, without the conscious participation and individual faith of the person baptized ; nor could he see any danger accruing to the age of inno-

* Church Hist. Vol. i. p. 312, Torrey.

cence from delaying it; *although this view of the matter was not logically consistent with his own system.*"

Compare this last clause with what Dr. Woods says about Tertullian's opposing infant baptism from his Montanistic views. Neander has no such idea.

Equally to our purpose is the following from Neander, quoted by Dr. Sears from his work on Tertullian before mentioned: "Tertullian declared against infant baptism, *which at that time was certainly not a generally prevailing practice,—* was not yet regarded as an Apostolical institution. On the contrary, as the assertions of Tertullian render in the highest degree probable, *it had just begun to spread, and was therefore regarded by many as an innovation.*"

The testimony of Tertullian, while it proves, that *in the opening of the third century*, infant baptism had its advocates in the Church, it proves also, that it could not have come from the Apostles. If any reader doubts this, I commend him to Neander's Church History. In the first place, infant baptism was in accordance with Tertullian's doctrinal standing point. In the second place, it was in no way inconsistent with his later Montanistic notions. In the third place, he was an earnest defender of all *traditional observances*. Several additions to and corruptions of the primitive worship he defended, on the ground, that they were generally observed, and were supposed to have come from the Apostles, such as *trine immersion*, unction after baptism, &c.; some of

which he was frank enough to say were "somewhat more than our Lord had decreed in the Gospel." Now had infant baptism been in general use in the Church in his day, and been generally understood to have come from the Apostles,—while it was in entire harmony with his doctrinal system—he could not have opposed it. We search in vain for any motive for his opposition to it, except the one assigned by Neander, *that it had just begun to spread, and was regarded as an innovation.*

Before closing this section, I ought to remark, that Mr. Robert Robinson, and many other respectable writers, take the ground, that the writings of Tertullian afford no evidence, that infant baptism was even broached at this time. They contend that the persons whose baptism Tertullian was opposing, were not infants, but children, old enough to ask for baptism. There is some plausibility in this view from the fact, that Tertullian designates the class as *parvuli* (little ones) instead of *infantes* (infants). The arguments for it are fully stated by Mr. Hinton, in his History of Baptism. I am free to say, however, I think the authority of Neander outweighs them. I have found no historical writer who appears to have investigated Tertullian with the care he has.*

* In justice to the cause of truth, it should be added here, that Tertullian's book *De Baptismo*, from which this celebrated passage is taken, was not merely written before he became a Montanist, but that it is expressly directed against the errors of Quintilla, (*Adversus Quintillam*). This fact determines his stand-point. Quintilla, as all admit, was a female preacher or prophetess of the Montanistic school.

CHAPTER X.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—ORIGEN DECLARES
INFANT BAPTISM AN APOSTOLIC TRADITION.

ORIGEN, according to Neander, was born A. D. 185, and died A. D. 253. His writings, therefore, come within the first half of the third century. He was a catechist of the Church of Alexandria in Egypt, and one of the most celebrated writers of the early Church. In philosophy he was a Platonist, and in theology an Eclectic. His philosophy exerted a great influence upon his theology, and his religious eclecticism led him to search thoroughly all religious systems, and embrace unhesitatingly whatever he deemed to be truth. Hence, though he was far from being a

At first she went farther in her errors than the main body of the Montanists, though she afterwards joined them. Her followers were called after her Quintillians or Quintillianists, sometimes Pepuzians, from Pepuza, a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, where they appeared about A. D. 189. *Migne*, in his notes on Tertullian, (Paris, 1834,) says that she was disseminating her doctrines in Carthage, about A. D. 200, and that Tertullian wrote this book on Baptism, to oppose them. Her doctrines on baptism, therefore, are not to be ascribed to the Church in general. Her sect denied the doctrine of the Trinity, which led Tertullian to say that they had not the same God, and it is no wonder that they had not the same baptism. This book, therefore, so far from proving that infant baptism was *then* general in the Christian Church, gives the *first intimation of its existence*, and that too as an *innovation of heretical origin*. It is of immense importance that these facts should be duly weighed by those who now practise it. They entirely reverse the conclusions of Dr. Wall.

J. N. B.

Gnostic, in the then acceptation of the word, he had many Gnostic tendencies, as Neander clearly shows. He introduced an allegorizing arbitrary method of interpreting the Scriptures, which would be absurd to sober biblical readers of our day. Among other errors which he held, he agreed substantially with modern Restorationists in his views of the attributes of God, and future punishment. Yet with all his errors, he was a man of giant intellect, great excellencies of character, and profound and earnest piety.

Dr. Wall quotes three passages from his writings which speak of infant baptism, as a practice then existing in the Church. The authenticity of these passages is indeed disputed by Dr. Gale, in his *Reflections on Wall's History*; but it seems to me successfully sustained by Wall in his *Defence*. There seems on the whole no good reason to question their authenticity.

Of these passages—though they are each of them conclusive as to the fact that the practice of infant baptism then existed to some extent in the church, A. D. 230–253—the one most relied on by Pedobaptist writers, is the following from his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, because it speaks of infant baptism as a tradition handed down from the Apostles:—“*Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare. Sciebant enim illi quibus mysteriorum secreta commissa sunt divinorum, quod essent in omnibus, genuinæ sordes peccati, quæ per aquam et Spiritum ablui deberent: propter quas etiam corpus ipsum, corpus*

peccati, nominatur.” “For this cause also (the cause is stated in the following sentence) the church received from the Apostles a tradition, to give baptism even to little ones. For they, *to whom the secret things of the divine mysteries were committed*, knew that there was in all the pollution of original sin, which ought to be washed away by water and the Spirit; on which account also the body itself is called the body of sin.”

Now that the high churchman, Wall, who goes the full length of Augustine upon baptismal regeneration,—who makes baptism so essential to salvation, even in the case of new-born infants, that there is no ground of hope for them, dying unbaptized, except when the parents had determined upon having them baptized, but death or some other necessity prevented—should think this declaration of Origen an adequate proof of the apostolicity of infant baptism, is not strange. But that sound, judicious, evangelical divines, of a Genevan tendency, who have before them the results of the thorough explorations into ecclesiastical antiquities of late years, should make such a use of it, is next to incredible. However it may be disclaimed, it is in fact placing the support of Infant Baptism upon Church Tradition. It is not pretended that either Christ himself, or any of the Apostles *commanded* infant baptism;—and the so called apostolical precedent vanishes on a moment's inspection. From all the Christian writings that have come down to us, from the first hundred years after the Apostles, but two pas-

sages are quoted by Pedobaptist authors as favoring infant baptism, and these Dr. Woods admits are not conclusive proofs.* Tertullian shows that some pleaded for it in his day; but this is no proof of its having come from the Apostles; on the contrary, his opposition to it is strong evidence against that supposition. But Origen declared that it was a *tradition received from the Apostles*; and this is all the evidence which Dr. Woods brings, which upon his own admission is to be deemed conclusive, in regard to the practice of the church for the first hundred and fifty years after the Apostles.

But let us examine a little this so-called Apostolical Tradition.

In the first place, according to the rule of Augustine, Origen had no right to call this an apostolical tradition. “*Quod univērsa tenet ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate apostolica traditum rectissime creditur* :† “Whatever the universal church holds, and was not instituted by councils, but was always held, is correctly believed to be nothing else than an apostolical tradition”—or in the shorter phrase, “*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*”—“*What has been held always everywhere, and by all.*” According to this rule, infant baptism was not an apostolical tradition. It was held neither *always, everywhere, nor by all.* Tertullian, a short time before, had opposed it,

* See his Lectures on Inf. Bap. pp. 112, 113, 2nd Ed.

† August. con. Donat. cited by Dr. Wall.

and even in Origen's time, according to Neander,* similar difficulties were urged against it.† Besides we have shown, that there is not only no evidence of its existence in the Church the first hundred years after the Apostles, but, from Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria, positive evidence against it.

2. Neither Tertullian who lived before Origen, nor by Cyprian who lived after him, and who were strenuous defenders of the authority of tradition, intimate any recognition of this practice as an apostolical tradition. Says Rev. Dr. Sears :

* Church Hist. Vol. i. p. 314.

† Origen confesses this in his *Hom. in Luc. 14.* ' Quod frequenter inter fratres quæritur, loci occasione commota [commotus] retracto. Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem peccatorum. Quorum peccatorum? Vel quo tempore peccaverunt? Aut quomodo potest ulla lavacri in parvulis ratio subsistere, nisi justa illum sensum de quo paulo ante diximus; nullus mundus a sorde, nec si unius diei quidem fuerit vita ejus super terram? Et quia per baptismi sacramentum nativitatis sordes deponuntur, propterea baptizantur et parvuli.' In Wall's translation, " Having occasion given in this place, I will mention *a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren.* Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. *Of what sins? Or when have they sinned?* Or how can any reason of the laver in their case hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now; none is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth? And it is for that reason, *because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized.*"

The italics are ours. Who can fail here to notice that the baptism of infants was *a new thing*, full of perplexity to thoughtful Christians, who found no law, example, or explanation of it in the Word of God? Who now is prepared to admit the explanation of Origen? Especially in the face of that Divine decision concerning baptism—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God:" 1 Peter iii. 21. J. N. B.

“It deserves particular notice, that in all the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian, both of whom treat of the subject as a matter of controversy, *there is no allusion whatever* to an apostolical tradition in favor of the practice. Is it possible that these fathers of tradition could have overlooked so important a point? As Tertullian devised the method of meeting the heretics with the authority of tradition, would his opponents have spared him, if these weapons of his own could have been employed against him?”

3. Several practices, which are admitted by all Protestants to have been corruptions of the primitive worship, were well established in the Church before Origen's time, and expressly defended on the authority of *apostolical tradition*. And they came under the rule,—*practised always, everywhere, and by all*. That is, they were universally practised—no one calling them in question—and they came down from preceding times as apostolical practices. Such were a trine immersion for a single one—and various ceremonies attending baptism, as exorcism, unction, giving salt, and milk, and honey to the subject, clothing him in a white robe, and crowning him with evergreen. These practices, now rejected as innovations, and some of them as popish corruptions, were established in the Church as having descended by tradition from the Apostles; before infant baptism makes any appearance in history. And the fact that Tertullian maintained these practices on that ground, while he opposed infant baptism, is a strong proof that infant baptism could not be

maintained on that ground in that age of the Church, and by plain consequence, that it was an innovation.*

Infant communion, also, as Neander shows, † had a recognition in the Church as early as infant baptism. It is worthy of particular notice in this connection, that Augustine, the only other ancient writer who calls infant baptism an apostolical tradition, declares also that infant communion is an apostolical tradition. He does this in the following passage, cited by Dr. Wall, on whose authority I quote it. “The Christians of Africa do well call baptism itself one’s salvation, and the sacrament of Christ’s body one’s life. From whence is this, but, as I suppose, from that *ancient and apostolical tradition*, by which the churches of Christ do naturally hold, that without baptism, and partaking of the Lord’s Table, none can come either to the kingdom of God, or to salvation and eternal life? If then neither salvation nor eternal life is to be hoped for any, without baptism and the body and blood of our Lord, it is in vain promised *to infants* without them.” ‡

4. The language of Neander on this point is worthy of particular attention: “Origen declares

* In a passage quoted by Wall from Tertullian, eight customs, that would now be regarded as corruptions and superstitions, are enumerated, as universally practised on the authority of tradition. See his *History of Inf. Bap.* Part 2, chap. 9, § 4.

† *Church History*, Vol. i. p. 333.

‡ Wall’s *History*, Part 2, chap. 9, § 15. Dr. Wall indeed attempts to evade the force of this; but we may well thank him for his fidelity, (usual with him,) in giving the passage, which speaks for itself.

it, (infant baptism) an *apostolical tradition*; an expression which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this (Origen's age) when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution, which was considered of special importance, to the Apostles; and when so many walls of separation, hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the Apostolic age."* The full force of this declaration perhaps cannot be appreciated without reading the church history of the period. From this we learn that on every subject of controversy, this was a prominent argument—apostolical tradition; and frequently it was applied as preposterously as in this case. Thus a controversy arose touching the recognition of baptism administered by heretics. Stephen, bishop of Rome, declared for its recognition—Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, declared against it. Stephen urged apostolical tradition—Cyprian, one of the fathers of tradition, for once, manfully refused to bow to its authority. Whereupon Stephen, a pope in embryo, proceeded to act out Diotrefes towards Cyprian and his associates. But if Cyprian refused to yield to the authority of tradition in a doubtful point, surely we need not fear to resist it in a similar case.

5. The expression of Dr. Sears is worthy of notice. Speaking of the testimony of Justin Martyr (before cited), he says: "Here we have, from the earliest Christian father, a positive testimony against infant baptism;—an assertion that

* Church Hist. Vol. i. p. 314.

the baptism, which had been handed down from the Apostles, was an ordinance in which one was to exercise choice and knowledge. How much stronger is this early testimony, than the *later Gnostic tradition of Origen*, and the still later belief of the polemic Augustine, in regard to such a tradition !”

In reference to what precise point Dr. Sears calls this declaration of Origen a *Gnostic* tradition, he does not inform us, although he elsewhere refers to passages in Clement, Origen, and Basil, which I have not at hand. Origen however, as Neander shows, had many Gnostic tendencies, though not belonging to any Gnostic sect. Now the Gnostics held that the real meaning of the scriptures does not appear in the obvious meaning of the words spoken by the Apostles to the multitude, but that it was revealed only to the perfect; and “within the circle of the initiated it was to be continually handed down. The knowledge of this *secret tradition*, therefore, was the only true key to the more profound exposition of scripture.” He adds, “other church teachers, whom the spirit of Platonism had too strongly influenced, were not wholly exempt from that element.”* Among these *Platonizing* teachers, Origen was pre-eminent. In connection with this, the words of Origen, in the passage which is the subject of this discussion, are certainly significant. “The church received from the Apostles a tradition to give baptism to infants.” But certainly the

* Church History, Vol. i. p. 388.

Apostles gave no such direction in open terms. No! "They to whom the secret things of the divine mysteries were committed knew," &c. Was it then a secret thing, handed down in the circle of the initiated? So it would seem. Of what value is such cabalistic evidence?

I have been particular in the examination of this testimony, because I consider it altogether the most plausible argument that has ever been adduced from ecclesiastical history in favour of infant baptism. And the result may be briefly stated as follows:

1. If it could be proved that infant baptism was generally received in Origen's day, as on the authority of an apostolical tradition, it would be no more conclusive as an argument for it, than it is for the other numerous corruptions then prevailing in the church, at that period and on that authority.

2. I have proved, that notwithstanding Origen's declaration to this effect, it was *not* so received. The silence of the great Fathers of tradition in regard to such a tradition is conclusive against it, especially when taken in connection with the fact, that infant baptism was opposed by Origen's own contemporaries.

3. If it was a secret cabalistic tradition, it is simply contemptible.

We may further observe, that the constant disclaimer of Pedobaptist writers, when they quote Origen, that they have nothing to do with his *opinions*, but only quote him as testimony *on a question of fact*, is not to the purpose. For if

the question of fact be, whether infant baptism existed in the Church in the *first half of the third century*, I, for one, make no issue on that question. That is an admitted point. But that is not the question to which the quotation is brought. The question of fact is, *whether it was handed down from the Apostles?* Origen testifies that it was; but when his testimony is sifted, it amounts to no more than an expression of his *opinion* to that effect. If it be said that Origen, who was born within one hundred years of the Apostles, had a better chance to form a correct opinion in relation to such a question than we have—if that be admitted, it will not avail for them, who disclaim all responsibility for his *opinions*; and it will not avail against us, since we have shown by conclusive evidence that his opinion on this point is erroneous.

One other fact deserves notice. Origen availed himself of the practice of infant baptism, then gaining ground in the Church, to support a Christiano-Platonic theory of his about the inherent corruption of human nature; viz: that the souls of men existed and sinned in a previous state, and hence that all men were born sinners; and that sin, in the case of infants, must be washed away by baptism. On the other hand Tertullian strongly opposed infant baptism, while his theological position would naturally have led him to maintain it. It would have harmonized perfectly with his theory of original sin, and his (which were the prevailing) notions of the efficacy of baptism. Augustine, in maintaining the same

doctrine against the Pelagians, made large use of infant baptism. Those writers err egregiously, (according to Neander,) who represent Tertullian as opposing infant baptism on account of the necessities of his theological system. Precisely the reverse was the fact. - The necessities of his system, had they not been overpowered by the force of truth, would have made him a Pedobaptist. And his decided opposition to infant baptism, under those circumstances, amounts to near a demonstration, that infant baptism was then an innovation of recent date. But this theological relation of infant baptism, in precisely the same ratio that it *adds strength* to the argument against infant baptism, arising from Tertullian's opposition to it, *weakens* the testimony of Origen in its favour.

CHAPTER XI.

INFANT BAPTISM GRADUALLY INTRODUCED.—
CYPRIAN, NEO-CÆSAREAN COUNCIL, GREGORY
NAZIANZEN, BASIL, AUGUSTINE, PELAGIUS.

THE next Father whose writings throw any light upon the subject of our inquiry, is Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, at the middle of the third century—a man of many and great excellencies of character, but very unsafe as a religious guide. His partiality for infant baptism may be as easily traced to his defects, as to his excellencies. The

spirit of Judaism formed a leading element in his religious character. He was not only one of the fathers of Tradition, but also of Prelacy, and Monasticism. One shall scarcely find, in the middle ages, higher encomiums of that grand corruption pointed out in prophecy* as a leading characteristic of the great apostacy, *celibacy*, than are to be found in the writings of Cyprian. The only excuse for him is that he was but "a novice" in Christianity, when chosen bishop of the church, A. D. 248, having been converted from paganism only two years before. His whole ministry was but nine or ten years.

The principal passage in the writings of Cyprian, that speaks of infant baptism, is one that puts it out of all doubt that infant baptism had a recognized existence in the North African Church at that time; and it also, taken in connection with the preceding evidence, puts it out of all doubt that it was a recent innovation there, probably of a few years date.

A local council or synod, composed of sixty-six of the North African clergy, with their Metropolitan, Cyprian, at their head, assembled at Carthage, A. D. 253, to consider various questions of doctrine and discipline. Among other matters, one Fidus, a country bishop, proposed the question, Whether it were lawful to baptize infants immediately upon their birth, or not under eight days thereafter, as in the case of circumcision? A clear evidence that it was but a recent innova-

* 1 Tim. iv. 3.

tion. For if infant baptism had been established by apostolical authority, and was the uninterrupted practice of the church down to that time, no such question could have been asked. If there had been nothing else to keep the minds of men quiet about it in an age in which church tradition had as much authority as the scriptures, constant usage would have prevented such a question from ever being mooted. The fact that such a question was asked, is a proof that infant baptism did not come down from the apostolic age.

The epistle of Cyprian, giving the decision of the bishops, is equally conclusive of the same fact. In it is not a word intimating any command of the Apostles in relation to either infant baptism, or any of the circumstances connected with it; no apostolical precedent alluded to; not a word of any church tradition or usage in relation to either infant baptism in general, or the particular circumstance proposed. He expresses the opinion that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born, because Christ said he came not to destroy men's souls, but to save them. The equality of infants and adults in respect to the "divine gift" is proved by the circumstance that the prophet Elisha stretched himself upon the body of the Shunamite infant, so that his head, face, limbs, and feet, were applied to the corresponding members of the infant! The eighth day in the Jewish circumcision, he says, was a type of the Christian Sabbath, and hence, after the coming of Christ, is of no importance. A new-born infant is not to be con-

sidered unclean, so that any one should object to giving it the kiss of brotherhood, (one of the *traditional* customs in baptism) because it is written, "To the clean all things are clean;—and Peter said, The Lord hath showed me that no person is to be called common or unclean. "Wherefore" he concludes, "it was *our opinion* in council, that from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful, and kind, and just to all, we ought to prohibit *no one*. Which, as it is to be observed and retained *in respect to all*, so we think it is to be especially observed in respect to infants, and those but just born, who the rather deserve this very thing from our help and the divine mercy, because, *immediately upon their birth, crying and weeping, they do nothing else but supplicate it.*"* The italics in this novel, and truly marvellous decision are our own.

That infant baptism was an innovation of the third century, further appears from the fact of its very *gradual* introduction into the catholic church. For, while it seems to have been but partially established in the African churches in the middle of the third century, there is sufficient evidence that it could not have been generally practiced in the Greek churches for more than a century later. The sixth canon of the Council of Neo-Cæsarea, held A. D. 314, before a National Church was established by Constantine, declares decidedly against infant baptism. "A

* See the original in Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. Part I. chap. 6, § 1.

prospective mother may be baptized when she pleases. For, in this act, the mother has nothing in common with the child; (the child has no share in it) *because THE CHOICE which is in the PROFESSION [at baptism] is declared to be EACH ONE'S OWN :*"—διὰ τὸ ἐκάστου ἰδίαν τὴν προαίρεσιν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ δείκνυσθαι.† There surely could be no question about the import of this language, if it did not arise out of the period in which it is found—after the acknowledged introduction of infant baptism, in one section of the Church at least. How distinctly is the fact recognized, that in baptism there is not only a profession, but that profession is the expression of the candidate's *own INTELLIGENT CHOICE* ἰδίαν προαίρεσιν—and where there could not, in the nature of things, be an intelligent choice, there was no baptism, though there might be the semblance of it. How could an unconscious infant be baptised, on these principles? This surely could not be the declaration of men that held with Cyprian of Carthage, the unconditional necessity of the baptism of even new-born infants.

The natural inference from this canon is, that the baptism of unconscious infants was not admitted in the Greek churches so early as 314. And Neander says,† "*It was far from being the case, especially in the Greek church, that infant baptism, though acknowledged to be necessary (to salvation), was generally introduced into prac-*

* See the original in Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. Part I. chap. 8

† Ch. Hist. vol. 2, p. 319.

tice." And again, "Among the Christians of the East, infant baptism, though in theory acknowledged to be necessary, yet entered *rarely and with much difficulty* into the church life, during the first half of this period," *i. e.* from A. D. 312 to A. D. 590. As perfectly as infant baptism harmonized with the theological views of that period, especially the notion of the necessity of baptism to salvation, it is not easy to account for the difficulty of the introduction of the practice into the Church generally, except on the supposition that it was an innovation of an age considerably removed from the Apostolic.

The earliest Ecclesiastical History that has come down to us, that of Eusebius, of Cæsarea, was written about ten years later than this Council, A. D. 324. It embraces what he deemed most worthy of record in the whole Church, from the beginning to that time. Yet of so little moment did Eusebius regard infant baptism, that he never so much as mentions, or even alludes to its existence. This is a remarkable fact bearing upon the point in hand.

Conclusive to the same point, is the fact that Dr. Wall, who has produced from the early church writers, doubtless, every passage that would go to support infant baptism, (and many, too, that are totally irrelevant, and some that make against it,) *yet finds no writer out of Africa, in either the East or West, advocating the practice, for more than a century after its acknowledged establishment in Africa.* It is safe to affirm that there is no such writer. The first writer of the Greek

church that mentions infant baptism is Gregory Nazianzen, in a discourse assigned by Dr. Wall to A. D. 360,* *one hundred and seven years* after Cyprian's Council at Carthage. He simply gives his "opinion" in favor of the baptism of infants at once, where there was immediate danger of death; but where there is no such danger he advises a delay of three years or thereabouts, when they would be able to answer themselves some of the sacred words; *i. e.* make personally a *quasi* profession: a very natural position, if the commission of Christ was regarded as the fundamental law of baptism, and at the same time baptism was considered as necessary to salvation. Evidently the whole matter was yet unsettled, *even in the Established Church.*†

An Oration by Basil the great, who was a friend and contemporary of Nazianzen's, addressed to Catechumens in his own congregation, who were delaying baptism, is another proof that infant baptism must have been at least rare in the Greek church so late as A. D. 360. He says: "Do you demur, and loiter, and put it off? When

* Wall's Hist Part 1. Chap. 11, § 7.

† It is of great moment to remember that "The Church," in the style of most ecclesiastical historians, (who herein follow the Catholics,) means merely "*the party in power.*" Frequently, however, it is the "Catholic" party in opposition to the Arian, even where the latter were enjoying the imperial or royal patronage. But what writer is liberal enough to include in the term the persecuted Orthodox Dissenters? Their dissent from the Established Church of their times, was warranted by the word of GOD; (2 Tim. iii. 1-5,) yet who honors them for their fidelity? This "Church and State" style is most deceptive. J. N. B.

you have been from a child catechised in the word, are you not yet acquainted with the truth? When shall we see you become one of us?" &c. Dr. Wall says: "When I first copied out this passage, I thought it to be the strongest evidence against the general practice of infant baptism in those times, of any that is to be found in all antiquity; for it plainly supposes that a considerable part of St. Basil's auditory, at this time, were such as had been from their childhood instructed in the Christian religion, (and consequently, in all probability, born of Christian parents,) and yet not baptized."* It must appear to every reader a strong evidence.

The gradual introduction of infant baptism is further proved by the fact that no evidence appears that any of the distinguished Church teachers of this period were baptized in infancy, though there is evidence that several of them were not, though born of Christian parents. The careful religious training which Augustine received from his excellent mother, Monica, is well known. Yet he was not baptized until he was thirty-two, and his mother, though educated a Christian, was not baptized till adult years.† Gregory Nazianzen, born of pious parents—but a short time before, if not after, his father became a bishop—was not baptized till near thirty.‡ The parents and grandparents of Basil were persons of most

* Wall's Hist. Part 1, Chap. 12, § 4.

† See Wall, Part 2, Chap. 3. Comp. Chr. Rev. vol. 13, p. 216.

‡ Ibid.

distinguished piety, yet he was not baptized in infancy. He was baptized and ordained by the same man—his predecessor as Bishop.* The Emperor Theodosius was carefully educated in the Nicene faith, but was not baptized till his thirty-fourth or thirty-fifth year.† Chrysostom is another similar instance.‡ In short, says an able writer, “in all the lives of the Fathers of the first four centuries, given by Cave, some forty-four or forty-five in number, not a single one of them is there, born after the institution of the catechumenical order, (and many of them were children of pious parents,) in regard to whom it can be shown probable that they were not, some time before baptism, made catechumens, (*i. e.* instructed). And it cannot be shown that a single one of them was baptized in childhood.”§

The rise and progress of the Pelagian controversy, in the early part of the fifth century, in which the doctrine of infant baptism was prominent, affords abundant evidence that it was then universally maintained in the Catholic or Orthodox National Church, and was recognized as an Apostolical institution, with sufficient clearness for the respective parties to make it a leading argument. One point in the controversy was original sin. Augustine, in his arguments, frequently refers to the practice of infant baptism

* See Wall, Part 2, Chap. 3. Com. Chr. Rev. vol. 13, p. 216.

† R. Robinson, cited by Hinton, p. 269.

‡ Chr. Rev. vol. 13, p. 218.

§ Ibid.

as universal in the Established Church, and more than once declares it to be practised on the authority of a tradition received from the Apostles. And baptism, according to the formula on which it was administered, both to infants and adults—for they had but one formula in each of the cases—was for the forgiveness of sins. But as infants had no actual sin, they must have been baptized for the forgiveness of original sin. And the success of this argument, the evident embarrassment it gave Pelagius and his party, is a clear proof of the strong hold which the practice then had in that Church. No man could then deny infant baptism in theory and retain his standing in the Established Church. At the same time, how little real force there was in the argument is shown from the following remark of Professor Wiggins, author of the fullest and most authentic history of that controversy that has ever been published in our language. After showing that the Fathers before Augustine held different views from his on original sin, as a ground of infant baptism, he adds: We cannot here appeal to the old Church formula,—baptism is ‘for the remission of sins,’—in order to prove original sin the object of infant baptism. *It comes from that early period when only adults were baptized.* In every adult, actual sins may be presumed, and so the formula, (when it originated,) had its full import.”* So Neander, speaking of this same idea of Augustine’s, says: “This was favored by

* Emerson’s Translation, p. 345.

the ancient formula of baptism, which, however, originated in a period when infant baptism had as yet no existence, and had been afterwards applied without alteration to children, because men shrunk from undertaking to introduce any change in the consecrated formula, established by Apostolical authority.”*

The triumph of Augustine, in this controversy, gave infant baptism an undisputed throne in the Imperial Catholic, afterwards Papal Church.† He held that all infants, dying unbaptized, were lost. The Third General Council held at Ephesus, A. D. 431, established his system as the infallible doctrine of that church. From henceforth we find no Tertullians opposing infant baptism, or Nazianzēns counselling delay, in the bosom of that church.‡

* Ch. Hist. vol. 2, p. 665.

† That it ever prevailed among the orthodox dissenting bodies—the *Cathari*, or Novatianists, Donatists, Luciferians, Ærians, Vigilantians, Paulicians, Paterines, Gundulphians, Albigenses, and early Waldenses, we have found no evidence; but much positive testimony to the contrary. These pure and persecuted people appear to have maintained the primitive order in regard to baptism as well as other things, through all the dark ages to the time of the Reformation. The representations to the contrary by Drs. Wall, Murdock, Gilley, and Messrs. Perrin, Leger, Peyrant, and others, seem to be satisfactorily answered in the first three chapters of Benedict's History of the Baptists. New York, 1848.

J. N. B.

‡ From the decree of Theodosius and Honorius, A. D., 413, which forbid all *anabaptism* in the empire, under the penalty of death, we could hardly expect any Catholic Churchman bold enough to impugn infant baptism. Similar sanguinary laws were in force wherever the Church of Rome had power in subsequent ages. Hence flowed the blood of myriads of Christian martyrs. Hence, too, the

It is common for Pedobaptist writers to quote the statement of Augustine, that infant baptism was received as an Apostolical tradition; but how little reliance is to be placed upon it, is clear from the fact, that such men as Wiggers and Neander, who have investigated the whole history from the original sources, do not hesitate to pronounce it an unfounded assumption. In my remarks upon a similar declaration of Origen.* I stated the grounds on which Augustine declared it an Apostolical tradition, and showed that his rule does not cover it. No one doubts that it was then so received; and so was every other doctrine, practice, and rite then maintained in the Established church—the corrupt as well as the pure—the unscriptural as well as the scriptural—the false as well as the true. And how many errors and corruptions were then received on this authority!

The circumstances, too, in which Augustine uttered it, takes from it any consideration which might otherwise attach to it. It is an *ad hominem* argument urged in the heat of a bitter controversy. To bring forward expressions, uttered in the heat of a controversy, pushed even to anathemas and persecution, is imposing quite too much upon the credulity of the multitude, who have neither the time, nor the necessary facilities, to ascertain their real value as an argument.

destruction of their schools and books. Hence, lastly, the odious calumnies heaped upon their names. But the day of their vindication and triumph shall come. J. N. B.

* See page 168.

Still less consideration is due to the expression of Pelagius, as it is commonly quoted: "I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied *baptism to infants*." If this is what Pelagius *intended* to say, it must be allowed, that either he expresses himself with unjustifiable and unnecessary extravagance, or else his knowledge on that point was very limited. Dr. Wall himself shows that it is contrary to historical fact—for several sects of heretics, earlier and contemporary with Pelagius, denied all baptism, and of course denied baptism to infants.* And many orthodox sects who held to baptism denied it to infants. Tertullian, as has been shown, denied it. And Neander shows that similar difficulties were urged against it in Origen's time.† Julian, who belonged to the party of Pelagius, says: "I have written against those who suppose baptism not needful for children."‡

The Council of Carthage, 418, at which Augustine was present, decreed, "Whoever denies that children just born are to be baptized, let him be anathema."§ Was this curse hurled at nobody?

Augustine says, "Men are *accustomed to ask*, of what benefit is baptism to infants?"||

Chrysostom also complained that most persons neglected to baptize their children.¶ Jerome speaks of those who *refused* to give baptism to their children.**

* Part 2, chap. 5.

† Church Hist. Vol. i. p. 314.

‡ Wiggers' August. and Pelagianism, p. 65.

§ Id. p. 171.

|| Christian Rev. Vol. iii. p. 216.

¶ Ibid.

** Ibid.

Compare also the decree of the Council of Neocæsarea, in this chapter.

Pelagius, unquestionably was not so ill informed, as that form of quoting him would represent. He ought to have the benefit of a fair statement of his own language, and then he will have enough to bear, what with his own errors, and all the doctrinal errors that have prevailed since, stigmatized with his name.

He was writing to Zosimus, the Bishop of Rome, A. D. 417, in hope of getting the embryo pope on his side. Accordingly, he takes great pains to free himself from all suspicion of heresy on the subject of infant baptism, as it was necessary he should if he would gain any credit in that quarter. He says: "Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promised the kingdom of heaven to any, without the redemption of Christ. *Never did I HEAR* even any impious heretic, who would say what I have mentioned about infants."* He does not say he never heard OF any, &c., but he never HEARD ANY. The point was, that he himself was clear of heresy in that particular. He not only never advanced such an opinion, but he never had any intercourse with any that did. Still he does not say but that there might have been many.

If, however, we must admit an *of* as implied though not expressed, we will accept a hint from Dr. Wall. That writer, while he quotes Pelagius'

* See the original in Wall, Part I. chap. xix. sec. 30.

Latin, and translates without any *of*, still always reasons from it with an *of*. But perceiving that it contradicts plain historical facts, and therefore is valueless—since there were notoriously many heretics, who, denying baptism to all denied it to infants—to save the testimony for infant baptism, he *supposes* Pelagius meant to be understood as saying that he never heard of any heretics *that held to baptism at all*, who denied it to infants.* But here he would be as much at fault with plain historical facts, as he would be without that limitation. If a limitation be admitted, let us make one that harmonizes at once with the connection in which the expression is found, with Pelagius' views, with the state of the controversy, and with historical facts. We shall then understand him to say, that he never heard of anybody *that held to infant baptism at all*, who denied that infants are baptized as well as adults, *that they might enter the kingdom of heaven*. This does no violence to the language, and is altogether pertinent to the circumstances. The other interpretation is, in every aspect of the case, improbable.

* His. Inf. Bap. Part II. chap. v. sec. 1.

CHAPTER XII.

RECAPITULATION. CONCLUSION.

IF my reader have followed me attentively through the preceding chapters, which treat of infant baptism as a historical question, he will see that some important conclusions have been reached.

1. If infant baptism were established either by the law of Christ, or by Apostolical authority, and were generally practiced in the primitive church, we have a right to expect that there would be some express mention of it in the Christian writings of the first century after the Apostles. For those writings, though few in number, in comparison with a later period, leave us no room to doubt in regard to the doctrines then held, the forms of worship, and the ritual observances, unless this be an exception. For instance, those writings clearly show that the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath, was from the first observed; that the Lord's Supper was observed with primitive simplicity, and also Agapæ or love feasts; and that baptism was administered by immersion, accompanied with some simple forms at first, but degenerating in this respect through that period. *But we find no reference or allusion to infant baptism in that primitive period*—the first hundred years after the Apostles. Can we believe it was then practiced?

2. If infant baptism were unknown in the Church through the second century, *i. e.*, the first hundred years after the death of the last survivor of the Apostles, we should expect to find in the writings of that period, not indeed an express remonstrance against infant baptism; because as a thing unheard of and unknown it could not be remonstrated against in terms, but such descriptions and accounts of baptism as would exclude the conception of the baptism of infants, which, when recurred to after the introduction of infant baptism, would amount to a strong testimony against it. *And we find two such explicit testimonies; the one, of Justin Martyr, fifty years after the Apostles, the other, Clemens Alexandrinus, one hundred.** Can any conclusion be stronger than that infant baptism had no existence in the Church for the first hundred years after the death of the last survivor of the Apostles?

3. If infant baptism were an innovation of a later date, we should expect to find the period of its introduction marked with controversy in regard to it; some pleading for it, and some contending against it. *In the beginning of the third century we find such controversy.* And one clear note of remonstrance has sounded through all the intervening ages to our day, viz. that of stout-hearted old Tertullian.

4. If infant baptism were an innovation, we should expect to find the period of its introduc-

* Those quoted in the note (page 135-6) from Barnabas and Hermas, may be added.

tion marked by the prevalence of other innovations and corruptions of primitive purity. *That this was the character of the Church in the third century from its beginning, is universally admitted.*

5. If infant baptism were introduced at a period of the Church when Apostolical Tradition was accustomed to be pleaded for all its doctrines and observances—those which are acknowledged innovations and corruptions, as well as those which are scriptural—we should expect such a claim set up in its behalf. *Such a note has come down to us, feeble at first, but waxing louder as the distance of time from the Apostles increases: a very suspicious circumstance.*

6. If infant baptism were an innovation, we should expect to find questions asked upon trivial and unimportant circumstances, such as will always occur to some minds about a new thing, but which no one asks in regard to an old and well settled usage. So we find it, as witness the question of Fidus to Cyprian and the sixty-six bishops.

7. If infant baptism were an innovation and corruption, we should expect to find it logically and practically connected with some truth indeed—for how else could it gain a foothold? but with greater and more fundamental error. So we find it connected on the one side with the doctrine of original corruption from Adam, and on the other with the fatal error of a magical potency in the sacrament itself to cleanse from sin and regenerate the soul; and hence necessary for

infants, to cleanse them from native corruption and renew them for eternal life.

8. If infant baptism were a corruption we should expect to find it based upon misunderstood and misapplied Scripture. And so we find it. Through all the first ages of Pedobaptism, almost the sole text quoted was, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit," &c. *Not an example have I found of any reference in those ages to the baptism of households.* The changes are continually rung on the passage above—the water being supposed to mean baptism. From a like misapprehension, and a corresponding misapplication of John vi. 53, to the other sacrament, Infant Communion was coeval in its origin with infant baptism, and went hand and hand with it through several centuries.

9. If infant baptism were an innovation, we should not expect to see it come at once into general recognition and practice—born in full growth and panoply, like Minerva from Jupiter's brain—but gradually spreading and acquiring strength; the Church being for a time in a state of visible transition in respect to it. So we find it;—beginning early in the third century, encountering in the outset the opposition of Tertulian, it nevertheless was well established by the middle of that century in North Africa. Elsewhere, encountering indifference rather than opposition it slowly though surely gained ground; yet so gradually that more than a century after its first establishment in Africa, we find a Nazianzen maintaining a position neither Pedobaptist

nor Antipedobaptist, but combining elements of both; and this clear transition state further evinced by the well established fact that the custom was generally more honoured in the breach than in the observance; until in the opening of the fifth century, by the issue of the Pelagian controversy it becomes fully recognized in the Established Catholic Church; and in the thirty-second year of that century established by the General Council of Ephesus, as the universal law of the Church *founded on the supposed absolute and unqualified necessity of baptism to salvation.*

10. If infant baptism were a corruption, we should expect that it would gain a stronger hold, and make a more prominent figure, in proportion as the Church grew more corrupt. Such was the fact in regard to it. *No fact is better established in ecclesiastical history than this.* Whereas, in proportion as the Church has grown more pure, since the time of the Reformation, especially where Liberty and the Bible have been enjoyed, infant baptism loses its hold, and falls into desuetude, in spite of every effort to maintain it.

And now let us briefly glance at the course of the entire argument contained in the preceding pages.

In Part I. we have carefully and patiently examined the Covenant of Circumcision, both as to its nature, its form, its rite, the blessings pledged by it, and its duration, and have found that no inference can be drawn from it in support of Infant Baptism. We have seen that so far is it from

being the Covenant of Grace, its form, spirit, and rite, as well as the express declarations of Scripture, all demonstrate its identity with the Old Covenant. We have found, that so far is it from remaining in favour as the fundamental law of the Church, with baptism a substitute for its original rite, the rite of circumcision was essential part of the Covenant itself, appointed to be observed without failure or exception, while the Covenant itself should endure; that both Covenant and rite, as to any divine authority, expired at the same moment, together with all the Jewish ritual, when our Saviour said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost; and that the direct declarations of the Apostles, demonstrate that Christian baptism is not the substitute of Jewish circumcision.

In Part II. we have seen the inconclusiveness of the arguments usually brought from the New Testament in support of Infant Baptism—we have seen, from direct Apostolical authority, that infant baptism, if not ordained by direct command or clear Apostolical precedent, is forbidden in the New Testament; we have seen that so far is infant baptism from being Christian baptism, it is contrary to and subversive of the Law of Christian baptism as enacted by the King in Zion; we have seen that while the baptism of believers only was the practice of the Apostles, as shown from the records of their ministry, every apostolical allusion to baptism is, in effect, a prohibition of infant baptism—and finally, we have examined the early History of the Church, in relation to

this subject, and found no expression or allusion in the writings of the early Fathers justifying the belief of the existence of this rite in the two first centuries of the Church, but on the contrary plain declarations that it did not then exist; and that so far is Ecclesiastical History from showing it to be an apostolical practice, it shows that it originated in the Catholic Church, as late as the first half of the third century.

And in view of these clear instructions of the Scriptures, and these corroborative historical facts, what must be the duty of every Christian in regard to this rite? Can he, in consistency with a sound allegiance to his Sovereign and Head, maintain it, either by profession, precept, example, or participation? Grant that a sincere and earnest piety may make an auxiliary of it, in the religious education of children, has piety a RIGHT to employ such a foreign auxiliary? Surely the piety must be both defective and supererogative, that holds up, as an ordinance of God, an invention of men; and an invention, too, which makes void the corresponding ordinance of God. The disastrous effects of such tampering with God's ordinances, originating even in sincere and earnest piety, the history of the Church has, alas, too clearly exhibited.* Hear the strong, clear-toned

* While the peculiar *benefits* supposed to be secured through infant baptism, by its first advocates, are now admitted by most Evangelical Pedobaptists to be *imaginary*, this, alas, is far from being the case with its *evils*. A volume might be written on this subject, not unworthy of

remonstrance of that great Apostle, whose life and sayings fill up as large a portion of the New Testament as is occupied with the record of the life and sayings of the Saviour himself:—"IF YE BE DEAD WITH CHRIST FROM THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD, WHY, AS THOUGH LIVING IN THE WORLD, ARE YE SUBJECT TO ORDINANCES, AFTER THE COMMANDMENTS AND DOCTRINES OF MEN?"



APPENDIX.

(Referred to in the note, p. 135.)

DR. WALL, the learned historical apologist for infant baptism, several times referred to in the preceding pages, makes the following remarks upon a supposed false quotation from Justin Martyr on the subject of infant baptism, which it may not be inappropriate to present, in connection with the apocryphal testimony presented by Dr. Peters. It is in his *History of Inf. Bap.* Vol. iv. p. 511. Oxford, 1836.

“Some of the Antipedobaptist writers do give us occasion to observe the great mischief to religion that comes by any one’s forging words, and attributing them in print to any ancient father; so great, that though the first forger should repent, and publicly recant what he has said, yet the mischief would continue by ignorant men’s taking him at his first word, and commonly adding to it.

“Justin Martyr is (a very few excepted) the eldest of the Christians whose books are left to us. He was born in the Apostles’ time, and wrote about forty years after it. A testimony of

his is more considerable than of five or six later ones. Any words of his, that should plainly and expressly determine, either *for* or *against* infant baptism, would be a more material and decisive evidence than any that has yet been produced from antiquity on either side. The greater must the impiety be of any writer in this controversy, who should forge such decisive words in his name.

“Mr. Gale, writing his ‘Reflections’ on a passage which I had cited out of Justin, adds these words:—‘St. Justin here mentions only adult persons, and elsewhere says that adult persons only can, or ought to be, baptized.’ This, if true, is a very positive evidence. Mr. Davye recites Mr. Gale’s words, and adds to them another forgery of *my confessing* the thing to be so.

“If Mr. Gale can produce no such words of St. Justin, (as I am confident he cannot,) and Mr. Davye can produce no such ‘confession’ of mine, (as I am sure he cannot,) they are both of them forgers of evidences. And it concerns, not only the cause of religion and truth in general, but particularly the credit of the Antipedobaptists, that they be called to account whether they can or not; and if they cannot, that they be disowned. Otherwise they will be worse than the Papists.

“I did, as I passed along, take notice of this foul dealing. But I had a mind to give a memorandum of it here by itself. Because the attempt being extraordinary; and the evidence for the antiquity of antipedobaptism far more considerable, if it be a true one, than ever was heard of;

it is pity, but it should be brought to light, and into a fair view."

[In regard to Mr. Gale, it may be remarked that he evidently intended no *quotation* from Justin, but only the *inference* necessarily deducible from his succeeding words, namely, those in which he assigns *the reasons* for baptism. Still his language is not sufficiently guarded. It had been better to say—"Justin elsewhere gives the reasons for baptism derived from the Apostles, which reasons show that adult persons only can or ought to be baptized." Nothing can be more true than this statement—as every reader may see for himself, pp. 136, 137.—J. N. B.]

The remarks of Dr. Wall, however, apply with all their force (*iis mutatis mutandis*) to the pretended quotation cited by Dr. Peters. This is in no sense an *inference*, legitimate or illegitimate. It is pure *invention*. That he is the *inventor* of it, I by no means believe; that somebody is, I have no manner of doubt. Still, as he has cited it, giving no reference to any other writer, and no clue by which we can trace it any farther, it rests for the present on him. He has been publicly called upon, to show where in Justin's writings the passage is. But though he has noticed his reviewer in a newspaper article, and though several apologies for him have appeared in print, neither he, nor any of his apologists have noticed the demand. But the matter cannot thus be met. It is of graver importance. He who will find any such words as these in Justin, and inform the public where they are, will estab-

lish an argument for the apostolicity of infant baptism, of more weight than all that has been written in its favor, from Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, to Rev. Dr. Peters, in the middle of the nineteenth.

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I. I will be a God unto thee = all go
II Possession of Land of Canaan.

Did the "obscure" of the Sabbath condi-
tion, circumcision, save the choice
of Abraham from every, imaginable
use - when with this rite there
was not "repentance, faith or a
other holy exercise"?

How many of the circumcised
who left Egypt, entered the
Land of Canaan?

Not they were circumcised!

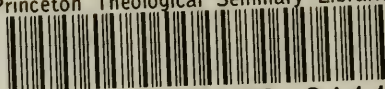
If that was all that was needed
the promise should have been
fulfilled to them.

Note - The Baptists in order to
maintain their position
have to subvert all script

See page 5



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